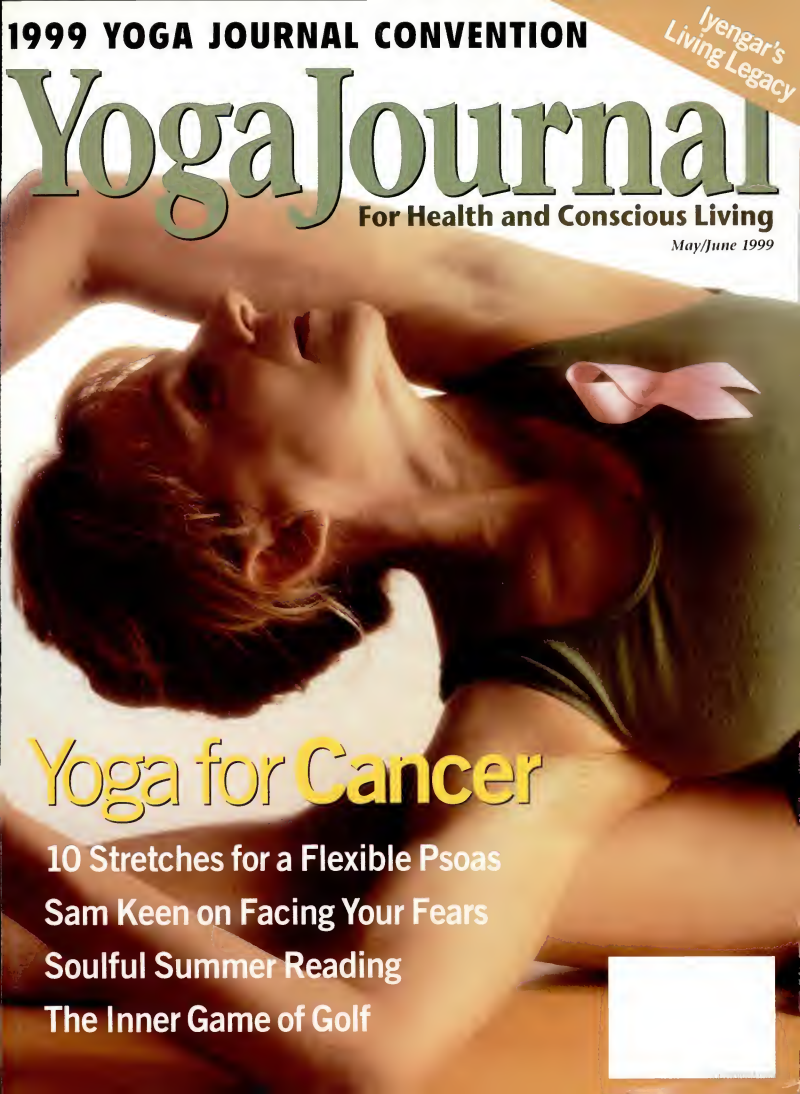
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May/June 1999



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*Issue 146* *May/June 1999*


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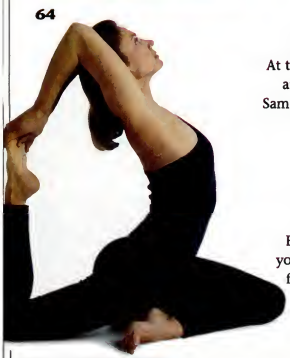


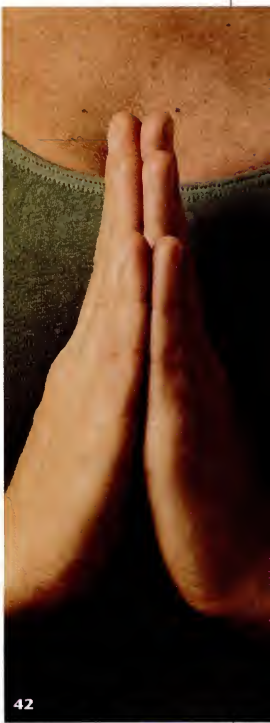
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**ON THE COVER**
Maritza is a vipassana meditation teacher and certified Iyengar Yoga instructor at the Yoga Studio in Mill Valley, CA. Here she's demonstrating Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana. Photographed by Anne Hamersky. Hair & makeup by Wendy Jill York.



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Namasté!

# Face-to-Face with Fear

Lately I've spent a lot of time reflecting on how I allow fear to run my life. I'm afraid of getting sick and not being able to support my family. I'm fearful my daughter, a competitive gymnast, will seriously injure herself while learning a new trick. Every morning as I drive to work across the Richmond Bridge, I wonder if this will be the day the "big one" hits, and the bridge will collapse while I'm crossing it.

When the *Yoga Journal* staff asked me what I was planning to write my column about for this issue, I replied, "My fear of writing the letter from the editor." The list goes on. The variety of fear I'm talking about isn't the kind that protects you in an emergency situation and prompts you to take flight or fight; it's the insidious, low-grade fear that seeps into the corners of our lives and prevents us from being present in the moment and appreciating life.

So it was with great curiosity that I started reading Sam Keen's new book, *Learning to Fly: Trapeze—Reflections on Fear, Trust, and Letting Go*, which is excerpted in this issue. Keen talks about becoming a "connoisseur of fear." Intrigued by this notion, I looked up the word "connoisseur" in my Webster's Dictionary and found that it means: "One who enjoys with discrimination and appreciation of subtleties."

When I read that, I recalled an incident in my own life that taught me a valuable lesson about the nuances of fear. Fifteen years ago while traveling alone in France, I made a serious miscalculation that brought me face-to-face with fear. I had planned a road trip that took me to a different town each day. Being a bit naive, I didn't anticipate how difficult it would be to find my way around a country where the road signs weren't in English, and I only had a modest grasp of the language. Each day turned into a struggle for survival; I became preoccupied with finding something to eat, a place to sleep, and a gas station. Overwhelmed by fear, I believed the worst would happen, and I barely noticed the beautiful landscape I was traveling through.



On the last day of my trip, I turned in my rental car and boarded a train to Luxembourg to catch my flight home. Relieved that my travels were nearly over, I finally relaxed, enjoyed the scenery from the train, and addressed some postcards. Thinking it would be a great idea if the cards were postmarked "France," I got off the train at the last stop before the Belgian border to find a mailbox. Having never been on a train before, I didn't realize that they don't wait for passengers to mail postcards. When I returned to the platform, the train was disappearing into the distance carrying with it my luggage and my purse.

The worst had finally happened. I was completely alone in a foreign country without any money or identification and unable to communicate my dilemma to anyone. I was swallowed up by fear, but within moments I started to laugh. I saw clearly how I had allowed fear to get in the way of enjoying my journey.

I wish I could say that my France experience freed me from fear, but life's lessons are never that easy. In the intervening years, I've been mugged on the streets of New York City, held up at gun point in Baltimore, and come close to dying. Whereas in these situations, fear was an appropriate, recognizable response, it's the everyday variety of fear that I find difficult to distinguish. But through meditation, I'm beginning to see how fear permeates my life.

My meditation teacher says that fear often masquerades as other mind states, including self-doubt—a feeling I'm well acquainted with. When I'm meditating and simply observing thoughts as they arise, it's easy to notice the undercurrent of fear beneath my self-doubt. If I treat it with equanimity and don't give any energy to the fear, it dissipates. Off the meditation cushion, it's harder to detect fear arising, and harder still to let it go, but I'm learning.

In a couple of weeks I'll be putting my fear-coping skills to a new test. I'm going flying on the trapeze with Sam Keen. Will I become a "connoisseur of fear" like Keen, or will I chicken out? Stay tuned.

**Kathryn Arnold**

P.S. Thanks to a kindly station master and a cab driver fluent in English, my France fiasco had a happy ending.

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## BARBARA LINDERMAN

is making waves throughout the yoga community with her *Yoga To Sacred Music:* this unique style of yoga, which combines the healing qualities of chanting and sacred music to breath and posture, is attracting even the most experienced yoga students.



Barbara Linderman currently teaches and resides in Ann Arbor, Michigan. She has developed and choreographed several powerful posture sequences and shares the same good company as B.K.S. Iyengar, K. Pattabhi Jois, T.K.V. Desikachar and Indra Devi; all of whom have studied under the renowned T. Krishnamacharya of Madras, India.

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*November 6, 1999 through November 13, 1999. Call 248-386-9642 to register.*

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May/June 1999 • Issue 146

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Yoga Journal is dedicated to communicating, to as broad an audience as possible, the qualities of being that yoga exemplifies: peace, integrity, clarity, and compassion. In particular, we focus on mind-body approaches to personal and spiritual development—such as hatha yoga, holistic healing, transpersonal psychology, bodywork and massage, the martial arts, meditation, Eastern spirituality, and Western mysticism—and on people who, in their life and work, epitomize these practices. We encourage open dialogue and a range of viewpoints, and we invite you to join us in bringing to our troubled world a life-affirming vision of harmony and wholeness.

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# The Naked Truth

I suppose the article "Take Me to the River" in your March/April 99 issue (p. 64) featuring naked "naga babas" has been perceived as quite sensational by your readers! However, as one who spent five weeks at Kumbha Mela last year, I would argue that the emphasis in your article is misguided.

During the winter of 1998, I shot a video documentary entitled "India: A Celebration of Spirit." Most of the video was made in Haridwar at Kumbha Mela, where I filmed some 14 different *acharas* (societies that shelter thousands of yogi saints) staging colorful grand-entry parades periodically during the many weeks of Kumbha Mela. In Haridwar, it was obvious that the naked *sadhus* got plenty of attention. I will admit, they also earned their appearance in my video. Nevertheless, my viewfinder at Kumbha Mela focused mostly upon *masters*, *sat gurus*, (many who rode to the Ganges atop chariot or elephants), and their huge retinues of yogis and yogini saints, along with singers, bands, dancers, community leaders, schoolchildren, floats, camels, and horses.

*J. Michael Dorner*
*Cashiers, North Carolina*

## Squatting for Joy

I enjoyed the "Beginners" article on Malasana in the March/April 99 issue (p. 26). I just had a baby three months ago, and this pose was one of the most useful during my whole pregnancy and labor. I followed a book on yoga for pregnancy which showed this pose along with adjustments to make as pregnancy progresses. I practiced it regularly throughout my pregnancy and during all phases of labor—especially the pushing phase! One variation which Denise Benitez did not suggest was doing the pose with your back against the wall. This was about the only possible way to do it during my third trimester. Thanks for the great article.

*Sari Grandstaff*
*Saugerties, New York*

## Parenting Challenges

This morning after reading the letter from the editor on spiritual parenting (Mar/Apr 99, p. 6), I am moved to connect with you on the subject of being present every moment.

I have two sons, Gabriel, 11, and Julian, 8. It is coincidental that your editor, Phil, also had a Gabriel. My son Gabriel was recently diagnosed with a first and second degree heart block, and surgery to implant a pacemaker has been recommended by the pediatric cardiology department at UCLA. He is currently at risk of sudden death. This has been extremely difficult for me. As a parent, I have experienced an entire range of emotions.

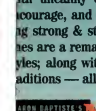
I am a yoga instructor for the City of Santa Barbara Cultural Arts, UCSB, and a Watsu and WaterDance practitioner, and I have myself been practicing and advocating healing oneself on all levels for almost 16 years. After researching many alternative therapies for Gabriel, such as the energetic healer Julie Motz, who wrote *Hands of Life*, and Dr. Incao, in Denver, Colorado, an anthropological doctor who addresses the whole child, and the aid of psychic guides, herbs, and homeopathy, I am still faced with agonizing decisions about my son's life.

I have come to a place where combining alternative therapies seems like, at present, the most viable solution for our entire family. And I have arrived at this place through being present and having faith.

I encourage parents to be conscious of their own personal state of health and well-being before and during parenting.

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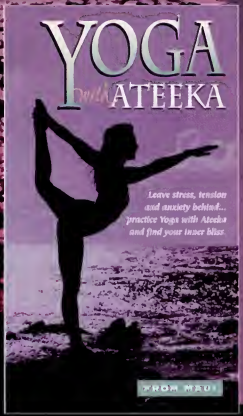













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*continued*

Where we come from in our loving and our discipline is experienced and internalized by the child. If we can be present, and perhaps learn to acknowledge our own emotions, our reactions toward our children might come from a clearer, more conscious perspective within ourselves, and our children might be raised with a far greater potential for healthy development.

*Diane Feingold*
*Santa Barbara, California*

## Cancer Research Dilemma

I was thrilled to open the March/April 99 issue (p. 8) to find the very eloquent letter from Don Beggs concerning communication with animals.

Mr. Beggs' question, "Should not our proper position (in regard to animals) be their humble caregivers?" was right on target. This is one of the implications of being a true yoga practitioner—do no harm, respect life in all beings.

And so it was with much confusion and disappointment that I came upon the promotion a few pages later for "Positive Yoga," a fundraiser for cancer research.

We all should know by now that much research means using animals. The yoga community must be more responsible and educate itself to make absolutely certain that no money raised for research is used for animal [testing]. We must be careful as our community grows not to fall into the old trap of throwing money at problems.

As "humble caregivers" we must not support systems which treat our animal companions like consumer products. Raising our consciousness comes with responsibility—unless it's all just lip service and fitness fads.

*Gisele Guerrasio*
*Portland, Oregon*

## Random Acts of Selflessness

In the March/April 99 issue of *Yoga Journal*, I read an article written by a yoga teacher who decided that next time a






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person in need asked him for money, he would do all he could to assist and let God take care of the rest (World of Yoga, p. 21). The article truly had an impact on my life and showed how helping someone can make all the difference in the world. The article reminded me to be a more compassionate and helpful person. I truly believe reading about someone else's encounters with "letting God take care of the rest" made an impact on my life, my girlfriend's, and the gentleman we were able to help.

Recently, while purchasing train tickets from a machine, we noticed a man next to us who only had a $20 bill for the $1.10 fare. The machine only accepted $1s and $5s. I gave him a dollar and Megan gave him a dime. The most grateful man tried giving us the few pennies he had in his pocket but we did not accept.

Try "letting God take care of the rest" this week. I'm glad I helped the man needing a ride home. He made it, thanks to my letting go.

*Marc Holm*
*Merrillville, Indiana*

## Un-Titled

While it may seem ungracious for the subject of your interview to complain about the article, and although D. Patrick Miller did let me review the text before publication, I would not have acquiesced to the title "Taming the Wild Mind" that you gave the article about my work (Jan/Feb 99, p. 64). For most people "taming the wild mind" suggests the kind of domination/domestication relationship that generally marks the human relationship to wild nature. The whole thrust of my interpretation of Zen ox-herding pictures is that they deal with the harmonious integration between human and animal selves, not taming or overcoming animal ego. "Your animal nature is your vehicle, and you have a good relationship with it...with respect and without abuse."

*Ralph Metzner*
*Sonoma, California*

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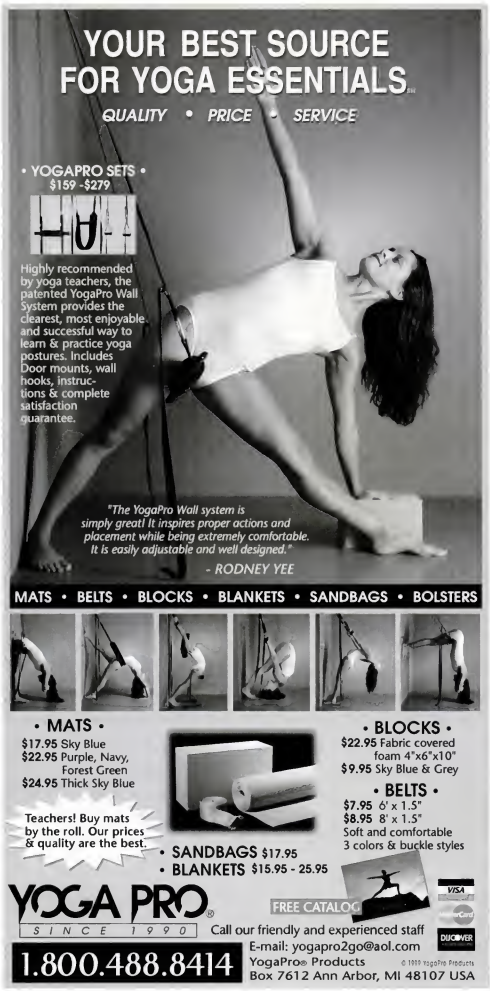
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## Spiritual Seeds

My wife has read *Yoga Journal* for a number of years and I have never read an article that enlightened me as much as Judith Lasater's articles on Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*. Yoga poses to me are a way to idle my mind, bringing me to the now and tilling the soil of my soul to plant the lessons discussed in Judith's articles. It is my belief that the yoga poses get the soul ready for the seeds of integrity and the articles by Judith are helping me to plant these seeds.

*Robert James*
*Springfield, Missouri*

I enjoy reading *Yoga Journal*, especially the articles on poses, along with the pictures of poses for specific ailments, such as headaches and backaches. Last issue the Judith Lasater article on the *Sutras* was especially enlightening. Her writing makes sense and isn't up there in the ozone of understanding. It helps to have someone in the know translate the *Sutras* in lay terms.

*Stella Byrd Sandquist*
*Pocatello, Idaho*

## In-Crowd Yoga

As I finished reading the "Yoga in Vogue" article (Sept/Oct 98), I find that although I am somewhat bewildered by the in-crowd digging what I find valuable, I am filled with joy at the opportunity to share. I hope we that have made yoga a part of our lives will share the enlightenment that we receive from the asanas with the new yogis. We cannot hold the ignorance of the majority against them. That is a form of snobbery. Throwing a temper tantrum because of the influx of rookies makes the experienced person look silly.

*Julie Kornegay*
*Fort Collins, Colorado*

I'm writing in response to Anne Cushman's "Yoga in Vogue." I have been practicing yoga since I was 6, when my mother moved to an ashram in Virginia, where she became a yoga teacher. While

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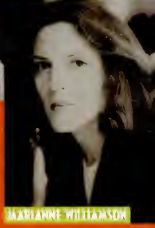
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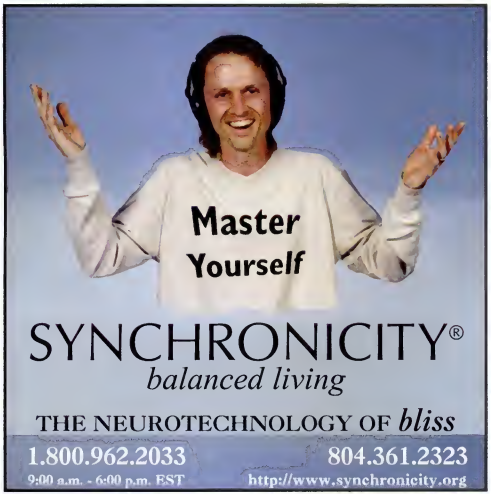

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# Are You Still Struggling To Find True Inner Peace, Balance, Self-Confidence and Prosperity In Your Life?

By Alan Roberts - Special Feature Writer



Clearwater, FL - At age 32, entrepreneur Bob Scheinfeld thought he had it all. Two homes. Two cars. A six-figure income and enormous net worth. It took losing everything to find out what really mattered. And to accidentally discover a powerful new method for creating true inner peace, balance, self-confidence and prosperity.

For most of his life, Scheinfeld was called "Lucky Pierre" by his father. He had a knack for always being in the right place at the right time. Things came easily to him. But suddenly, his life became "Murphy's Law" in action. What could go wrong did – *for seven years!*

"It was like someone flipped a switch and a new force was driving my life," he said. His relationship with a girlfriend ended in a messy lawsuit. Two businesses failed. On and on. Worst of all, he couldn't understand why it was happening. He was angry and confused.

Desperate, he quit his job to look for answers. He read books, attended seminars, consulted psychics and astrologers. He tried hypnosis and meditation. "You name it, I tried it at least once," he said. But "Murphy" was still at work. The rage and confusion were still there, he still didn't know why, and his money was almost gone.

Then Scheinfeld had his breakthrough. He discovered the true nature of the "force" driving his life (and driving your life and mine too) and a powerful new method he used to turn everything around.

At first, he thought his method was just "Weird Bob's" solution to a tough time, but when he shared what he learned, he discovered that it helped other people too. His method has now been shared with thousands of people in more than 50 countries.

"The beauty of it," he said, "is the method is so easy to understand and use, and yet it has the potential to help you make HUGE changes in your life-wherever it matters most."

Scheinfeld has been giving away a free report explaining his method. To get a copy, just call 1-800-320-3566, fax 813-519-9091 (24 hours) or write: Invisible Path Publishing, 20505 U.S. 19 North, #12-338, Clearwater, FL, 33764. Ask for Special Report "YJ."




*continued*

most kids ate "Happy Meals," we ate tofu. Our lifestyle was considered odd. So when Madonna talked about yoga on "Oprah," I was excited. I love yoga, and I feel that it is a discipline that everyone can benefit from. But in recent interviews, Madonna seems to me to be as arrogant and egocentric as ever. She is only using yoga and Eastern traditions to plump her cult of personality. When she tires of this, she will discard it for the next sensation, as will the rest of the country. When this happens, unfortunately, we will not revert to being weirdos and outsiders; we'll just be passé.

*Lauren*
*Charlottesville, Virginia*

## Oops!

► In the March/April 99 issue, the photographer credits for the photos on page 19 were incorrect. The top photo was taken by Patricia Ridenour and the bottom photo was taken by Doug Vann.

## Corrections to Yoga Journal Convention Brochure

If you're planning to sign up for the 1999 Yoga Journal Convention, please note the following corrections to the brochure that's bound into this issue:

► The final day of the convention is Monday, October 4, 1999, not October 12 as stated on page 14.

► Michael Lee's *Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy Master Class* has been moved from 11:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. on Sunday, October 3. The new code is 8YML.

► Rod Stryker's *Tantra of Yoga* class has been moved from 3:45 p.m. October 3 to 3:45 p.m, October 2. The new code is 4WRT.

► Stephen Cope's *Connecting with the Subtle Body* has been moved from 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. October 2. The new code is 1YSC.

► John Schumacher will be teaching a class on Forward Bends at 10:00 a.m., Monday, October 4. The class code is 9YJS.

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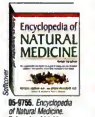




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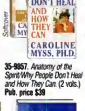
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# Prayer Is Good Medicine

Inspired by a visit to a hospital in India run by Sri Sathya Sai Baba and his followers, two Duke University researchers are investigating the effects prayer and other nonmedical practices can have on a patient's recovery after angioplasty.



Cardiologist Mitchell W. Krucoff and nurse practitioner Suzanne Crater were amazed by the upbeat reaction of patients and staff at the Institute for Higher Medical Sciences in Puta Parthi following the daily visits of Sai Baba, whose followers worship him as an *avatar,* an incarnation of divinity.

In contrast to the lethargy and depression common in many hospitals, the euphoric atmosphere at the Institute was overwhelming, Krucoff says. Patients and staff were beaming throughout the researchers' visit. "God came every day and made rounds and touched them," Krucoff says. "That kind of atmosphere has got to have physiological impact."

After their visit, the two researchers wanted to test the idea that spiritual influences could have a physiologically measurable impact. But how do you measure the religious influence that they had witnessed? As Krucoff says, "We couldn't scatter Sai Baba clones or Mother Teresa clones all over the United States."

Instead, Krucoff and Crater wondered what would happen if prayer and other forms of nonmedical treatment were offered to patients undergoing stressful heart procedures. Would patients who were prayed for or taught to relax benefit more than patients who were not? Their musings led them to begin the MANTRA study (Monitor and Actualization of Noetic TRAinings) at the Durham, North Carolina, Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Besides a group of patients who had prayers said for them, three other groups were exposed to touch, guided visualization, or stress relaxation. A fifth group served as a control group and did not receive any prayers or treatments.

The most unusual part of the study—and apparently the most effective—involved the healing use of prayer. The study found that angioplasty patients with acute coronary syndromes who were prayed for did 50 to 100 percent better (in terms of heart rate, blood pressure, and EKG results) than did patients in the control group. Patients who received guided imagery, touch, or stress relaxation assistance also benefited, showing a 30 to 50 percent trend toward improved outcomes.

Prayers were offered by seven different religious groups. Each group received the same data: the name of a male patient who was undergoing a catheter procedure, a stressful operation which involves threading a tube into the heart while the patient is awake. The prayers went out from Buddhist monasteries in Nepal and France, from Moravians in North Carolina, and from Carmelite nuns in Baltimore who prayed during evening vespers. In Jerusalem, prayers were inserted in the city's Western Wall by a Jewish group. Fundamentalist Christians, Baptists, and Unitarians prayed as well.

The prayers proved effective even though the MANTRA patients didn't know they were being prayed for, unlike the beaming patients in India who saw Sri Baba at their bedsides.

A larger trial of 1,500 patients is now under way at hospitals in North Carolina, San Diego, Washington, D.C., and Oklahoma City. The larger study will test whether the results can be repeated, and may influence doctors in the future to include spirituality in their prescriptions.—*Larry Sokoloff*

BEYOND THE STUDIO

# A Room to Renew



Whether you travel for business or pleasure, you know that lack of exercise, irregular sleep, and disrupted eating habits can distress even the most hardy traveler. And even devoted yogis find it difficult to take a yoga practice on the road. But Hilton hotels is doing its best to help.

Recently, this heavyweight of the hospitality industry introduced two new types of "lifestyle" rooms intended to soothe the travel weary. Guests staying in Stress-Less Rooms can loosen tight back, neck, and shoulder muscles with massage tools, snack from a mini-bar stocked with fresh fruit, and block out noise and light with blackout drapes. Health-Fit Rooms feature total body workout machines, nutrition bars, and maps of nearby walking and jogging trails. And, responding to widespread interest among the general public, Hilton has stocked both types of rooms with yoga videos for a guided morning or evening practice.

Hilton has worked in cooperation with the National Sleep Foundation, the American Council on Exercise, and the American Institute of Stress, among other organizations, in researching the health-related effects of travel. The company is test-marketing a total of 16 Stress-Less and Health-Fit rooms at selected Hiltons across the country, including San Francisco, Chicago O'Hare, and Washington, D.C. Guests staying in these special rooms pay nothing extra for a little more peace of body and mind.—*Colleen Morton*

*For tips on maintaining a yoga practice on the road, see "Yoga to Go,"* Yoga Journal *Mar/Apr 99.*

GRASSROOTS

# African-American Teachers Spread the Word

Inspired in part by the March/April 1998 *Yoga Journal* cover story on yoga in the inner city, Kundalini yoga teacher Krishna Kaur gathered a group of Los Angeles area yoga teachers—and the International Association of Black Yoga Teachers was born.

The Association's goal is to "spread awareness and practice of yoga in the black community and in other communities around the world."

According to Kaur, in the past, African-Americans have sometimes seen yoga as "something strange, something done mostly by white people. But," she adds, "people in the black community are very practical, and they're discovering that yoga has immense practical value in dealing with day to day stresses, toxicity, and health problems."

So far, Association members have focused on supporting each other in their current projects in the African-American community, and creating more ways to bring yoga to their neighborhoods. Kaur herself is teaching yoga to kids in Upward Bound, a program for at-risk youth.

Even though it began with a group of teachers from Los Angeles, the Association has begun planning its first truly international venture, "Yoga in Cuba." A yoga and music festival co-organized with the Cuban Association of Yoga and Global Exchange (a tour and travel company), the event is slated for November 25 to 29 in Havana.—*Todd Jones*

*To contact the International Association of Black Yoga Teachers, call Krishna Kaur at (213) 833-6371; P.O. Box 431918, Los Angeles, CA 90043. For information about "Yoga in Cuba," call Purusha at (323) 931-9676.*

## ♀ Health Conference

*Yoga Journal* and Kripalu Center have teamed up to sponsor the Women's Health Conference at Kripalu in Lenox, Massachusetts, May 20-23. The conference will feature conversations and workshops with Dr. Susan Love, Marion Woodman, Joan Borysenko, Linda Sparrowe, Rama Jyoti Vernon, and Elena Avila, and promises "solid information, experiential learning, and hands-on, practical tools for cultivating optimal well-being for yourself or women in your care." Call (800) 741-7353 to register.

# White Water Yoga

You don't have to be an experienced yogi or river runner to join Holiday River Expeditions for a rafting retreat on Idaho's Lower Salmon River, but you do have to be a woman. In fact, according to Deanna English, one of the trip's original organizers, the trip suits both the uninitiated and the experienced.

"Everybody comes off the river changed," says English, "We just facilitate." The company's popular guided



women's retreats combine the rough and tumble work of rafting with the inner quiet of yoga and meditation, camping, camaraderie, and massage.

Four- and five-day trips in Utah and Idaho cost $740-$1,090. For more information or reservations, call (800) 628-2565.—*C.M.*

ON THE ROAD

# A Date with Dallas



They say that everything is bigger and better in Dallas, and though the yoga community hasn't always been big, it's growing fast. While there are plenty of newfangled "fitness yoga" classes at health clubs throughout the Metroplex, serious students will find a few teachers with a more traditional spiritual orientation who have quietly practiced for many years. It's taken a lot of faith and persistence for these teachers to survive long enough to enjoy today's yoga boom.

When Ranjana Pallana began teaching yoga in the Dallas/Fort Worth area 30 years ago, the newspaper refused to print her ads for classes. "Nobody knew what yoga was," she remembers. She built a following over time, and in 1992 Pallana opened the North Dallas studio where she teaches today with four other instructors. In the past three or four years, business has taken off. In fact, Pallana plans to start teacher training classes this year. Over the years, she has incorporated many influences, including Sivananda's teachings. "My style is eclectic," Pallana says, "and I teach all levels of classes but do not separate them. People come in and work at their own pace."

At the centrally located Dallas Yoga Center, Director Fred Dowd echoes some of Pallana's sentiments about the region's change in attitude toward yoga. "We have a core group that's evolved together," says Dowd, who has been teaching full-time for 10 years. Though yoga was once perceived in the South as something strange or occult, today the Dallas Yoga Center has become a touchstone for many. "I started with props in my car, going from place to place to teach yoga," Dowd says. "It's wonderful now to have a home, and the community is responding to that."

Iyengar-style classes for beginners or mixed levels are only the beginning of the DYC's offerings; there is gentle yoga for seniors, Pilates and yoga, qi gong, creative dance and movement, and, for the experienced and "not for the faint of heart," Pune-style (continuous action) backbend classes. Private consultation in Vedic astrology is available. The DYC also sponsors weekend workshops with well-known yoga professionals, and hosts a *Yoga Sutras* study group. Because Dallas is a typically sprawling Southwestern city, many of the DYC's instructors also schedule classes at other locations.

Other studios offering classes include the Ananda Meditation and Yoga Center in Addison, just west of the Tollway, with drop-in yoga classes suitable for all levels and meditation, including a 9 a.m. Sunday morning group meditation. In Fort Worth, The Wellness Center offers 19 ongoing yoga classes per week, pranayama, and tai chi. New yoga and meditation studios are opening rapidly in the Dallas area, but local newspapers and weeklies can help keep you informed.—*Elaine Lipson*

## While You're There

### Where to Practice

▸ Ranjana's Yoga & Bodyworks
13614 Midway Rd., Ste. 101
(972) 233-4377

▸ Dallas Yoga Center
4525 Lemmon Ave., Ste. 305
(214) 443-9642

▸ Ananda Yoga for Higher Awareness
4901 Keller Springs Rd. #103
(972) 248-9126

▸ The Wellness Center
2481 Forest Park Blvd. (in Fort Worth)
(817) 926-9642

### Where to Eat

Here's a sampling of restaurants located just outside of Dallas proper in Richardson, recommended by the Dallas Vegetarian Lunch Group (972/355-8344):

▸ Macro Broccoli (macrobiotic, vegan)
580 W. Arapahoe
(972) 437-1985

▸ Suprabhath (Indian vegetarian)
581 W. Campbell
(972) 437-9727

▸ Veggie Garden (Asian vegetarian)
510 W. Arapahoe
(972) 479-0888

When it's time to splurge, try the cutting-edge fare of chef Stephan Pyles at Star Canyon (214/520-7827) or AquaKnox (214/219-2782.)

### Where to Explore

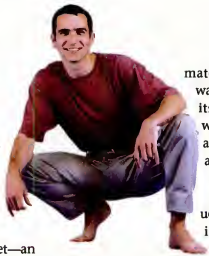
▸ Dallas Museum of Art
(With major collections of African, Asian, contemporary, and Indonesian art.)
1717 North Harwood
(214) 922-1200

▸ Fair Park
(A 227-acre historic site encompassing museums, the opera house, a horticulture center, and the Cotton Bowl.)
3809 Grand Ave.
(214) 670-8400

▸ The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza
(Located in the book depository made infamous by Lee Harvey Oswald.)
411 Elm Street
(214) 747-6660
(888) 485-4854

GOOD STUFF

# ChiPants



If you dream of everyday pants you can stretch in without ripping a seam—or if you simply want a casually dressy slack that lets you sit comfortably—ChiPants could be your answer.

ChiPants substitute a gusset—an extra piece of fabric that allows much more freedom—for the flat crotch seams traditionally used in trousers.

Committed not just to comfort and style, but also to environmentally kind materials and good wages and benefits for its manufacturing workers, ChiPants aims their products at consumers who want their clothes to reflect their values. The pants come in a number of styles, including men's and women's pleated-front twill, jeans, and shorts.

For more information, call (877) 512-9152 or visit the Web site at www.chipants.com.—*Todd Jones*

DEAR YOGI

# Staff Pose

In Staff Pose (Dandasana), I feel like I'm leaning back instead of sitting up straight. Am I doing this right?

—*Sean Henney, Miami, FL*



Just as Mountain Pose (Tadasana) is the foundation for standing postures, so is Staff Pose for sitting forward bends and twists. The "staff" is, of course, the spine, the central axis of the body, also called the "Staff of Meru" (*meru-danda*), a reference to the mythical Mount Meru at the epicenter of the Hindu cosmos.

In Staff Pose, you want the front spine to be long (but not necessarily "straight") and perpendicular to the floor. If you are leaning back, it may be because tight hamstrings are dragging the sitting bones toward your knees and the back of your pelvis toward the floor. Most students need to sit with some lift under the pelvis, such as a blanket or a bolster.

A simple way to check your alignment is to sit (on your support) against a wall. The sacrum and the shoulder blades should touch the wall, but not the back of the head. Put a small rolled-up towel between the wall and your lower back. Sit towards the front of your sitting bones, and adjust your pubis and tailbone equidistant from the floor. Without hardening the belly, firm the thighs, rotate them slightly toward each other, and draw the inner groins toward the sacrum. Watch the energy streaming up the front and down the back of the spine. Imagine the "staff" at the core of your own "cosmos," rooted firmly in the Earth, the brace and pivot of all you do.

—*Richard Rosen*

*Address questions to Dear Yogi, Yoga Journal, 2054 University Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704 or cmorton@yogajournal.com.*

# Yoga Diary

*New York City instructor Erin Fitzgerald sent us this story of an extraordinary guest.*

I teach yoga classes at the Film Society in Manhattan's Lincoln Center, home of the New York Film Festival and other cutting-edge film series. The classes are always special: I think we get a spiritual lift from all the artistic life coursing through Lincoln Center, which houses not only the Film Society but also the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic, the New York City Ballet, and the Juilliard School for Performing Arts.

One Thursday, our class received a gift. The Film Society was presenting a tribute to film director Martin Scorsese, and the Dalai Lama, who happened to be in town, agreed to attend a private screening of Scorsese's film *Kundun* in the theater next door—to be followed by a reception in our yoga studio!

My students mingled and shared hors d'oeuvres with an intimate gathering of Secret Service agents, Tibetan monks, and Hollywood celebrities (including Richard Gere, Harrison Ford, and Scorsese). Not only did they meet the Dalai Lama face-to-face, they also realized he was gracing the precise spots where they'd be doing their Dog Poses the very next day.

Friday's class started much like any other. But 15 minutes into the class my students and I felt a gentle but sudden shift in the room. "Do you feel how different the energy is here today?" I asked. It may sound strange, but I felt as if we were being guided through the asanas by a divine presence. We all acknowledged the profound change in the room, and continued with our asanas. Standing poses flowed with an unusual grace and ease. I noticed myself giving fewer verbal instructions, as if the room's energy itself was informing and shaping the class. It seems our yoga was truly blessed by a living bodhisattva.

*Do you have a story to share? Write to: Yoga Diary, Yoga Journal, 2054 University Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704.*

# Art Meets Meditation

For centuries Indian artists have created spiritually infused mandala paintings called tantric yantras for use as meditation aids. And although few Westerners have immersed themselves in this esoteric craft, over the past 20 years New Haven, Connecticut, painter Elizabeth Greenleaf has found yantras the perfect form for expressing her artistic passion.



The writings of Hindu masters and her practice of yoga inspire her art.

Tantric yantras are sacred Hindu artworks which depict the psyche and the cosmos. Traditionally, yantras are created by teachers to help students progress along the spiritual path, or by students at the direction of their teachers. In either case, the creation of the picture itself is a religious act.



Although each yantra is unique, all are composed of geometric forms imbued with classical symbolism. The circle (or mandala) suggests completion, wholeness, and the oneness of all in contrast to our separateness in the world of illusion. Triangles depict opposites: positive and negative, male and female, and the creation and dissolution of all phenomena. Squares represent both the world and protection from worldly matters. And lotus blossoms signify the individual's unfolding toward enlightenment and the unfolding of the yantra's teaching. Particular colors may also be associated with certain deities or mantras, although Greenleaf notes that there are wide variations in the use, understanding, and interpretation of color symbolism in yantra painting.

*More examples of and information about yantras can be found in:* Yantra: The Tantric Symbol of Cosmic Unity *by Madhu Khanna (Thames & Hudson, 1997) and* Tantra: The Indian Cult of Ecstasy *by Philip Rawson (Norton, 1984). For further information about Elizabeth Greenleaf's paintings, contact her at cronus@snet.net.*

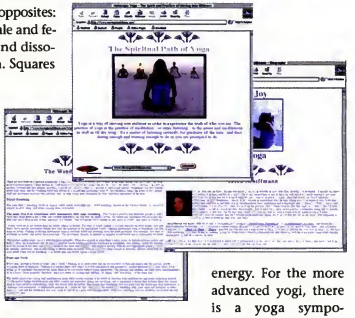
*—Therese Baumgart*

## Talk to Us

At *Yoga Journal*, we want to support the growing yoga community, so we are introducing a "Grassroots" column in this section of the magazine (see p. 19). This column will feature stories about yoga teachers and practitioners who are building the yoga community from the ground up, and yogis who are doing notable things or living their yoga practice in compelling ways. To pull stories from as broad and representational a network as possible, we need you to help us stay informed. Please send "Grassroots" story ideas to cmorton@yogajournal.com or Colleen Morton, *Yoga Journal*, 2054 University Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704. Thank you for helping us make *Yoga Journal* a lively resource for the yoga community.

YOGANET

# Asana On-Line




Although most yogis don't associate staring at a computer screen with relaxation, the Internet can actually be a useful tool for both the yoga newcomer and the dedicated practitioner. Erich Schiffman's site (www.movingintostillness.com) covers yoga basics with excerpts from his book *Yoga: The Spirit and Practice of Moving Into Stillness* (Pocket Books, 1996). For the beginner, the site offers detailed descriptions and photos of asanas, along with tips on breathing, meditation, and finding your lines of energy. For the more advanced yogi, there is a yoga symposium—somewhat like a message board—where teachers and students can participate in the yoga community by posting questions and exchanging views on the practice. The site also includes links to other yoga destinations on the Web, including an on-line translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. *—Stephanie Layton*

KNOW YOUR FUTURE WITH GREATER CERTAINTY THAN EVER BEFORE

# AT LAST–A REAL BREAKTHROUGH IN ASTROLOGICAL PREDICTION

## THE GREAT PYRAMID OF GIZA HAS RELINQUISHED ONE OF ITS GREATEST TREASURES – ASTROGLYPHICS –

**By J. Anderson**

If you're like me, you've tried astrologers, psychics, mystics, palm readers, etc. etc. and never really gotten accurate or reliable information that is useful and practical. Well I'll let you in on a secret. The ancient civilizations did have an incredible system of prediction and it has been rediscovered by an astrologer and researcher, Pat Hayward, who has also done more than 30,000 personal astrological consultations.

### MY FUTURE UNFOLDS

As the weeks progressed, I again listened to the tapes predicting my future. I think my jaw hit the floor, it was just amazing. The predictions made in the tapes were actually coming true. As each 2-4 week predictive cycle of the chart would unfold, I began to see how I could utilize some of my natural strengths, make some simple changes, and increase not only my effectiveness and success in the world, but also improve my relationships. This information is just for me, it is clearly not a one size fits all system, it is very, very personal.

### ASTROGLYPHICS' UNIQUENESS

Although I have seen many different types of astrological charts, I have never seen one like this. It looks like and has the 3-dimensional mathematics of a pyramid, and this structure's 2-dimensional counterpart has been used by the priests of ancient civilizations long since past. Hayward has discovered and decrypted a series of formulae that are striking in their accuracy, in a series of time cycles just for me. I was truly dumbfounded by the accuracy of the predictions. *I have never heard or seen anything like this . . . ever . . .*





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- *AND MUCH MORE . . .*

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***CJM, West Coast Physician:*** "Over the years I have had charts done by several well known astrologers. Pat Hayward is the only one who has been consistently right on with my chart. His system of analysis has been accurate and full of practical information time and time again. Having my yearly chart done by Pat is similar to having a road map to travel through life."

***SP, Business Owner:*** "I'm a working mom with two kids and it's been really helpful understanding their cycles as well as my own. When they're in a good cycle, great, but when they're in a more challenging time period, they need extra support, and I need the knowledge so I can be more patient and more tolerant."

***SI, Theatrical Company Owner:*** "Since I started getting the information about my time cycles from Pat's tapes, I found I've been able to work much more effectively, taking full advantage of positive cycles and transforming negative cycles into, actually, opportunities. I now wake up in the morning feeling very enthusiastic about the day."

***WL:*** "Well, the marriage issue was big on my mind when I received my tapes. I was worried. I thought something was wrong with me, and after hearing my tapes, you mentioned marriage cycles and that I should try to be more patient. That period did come. I was married within a month of prediction."

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# Push the Wall

*Explore the complexities of your shoulder joints with this dynamic spinal extension.*

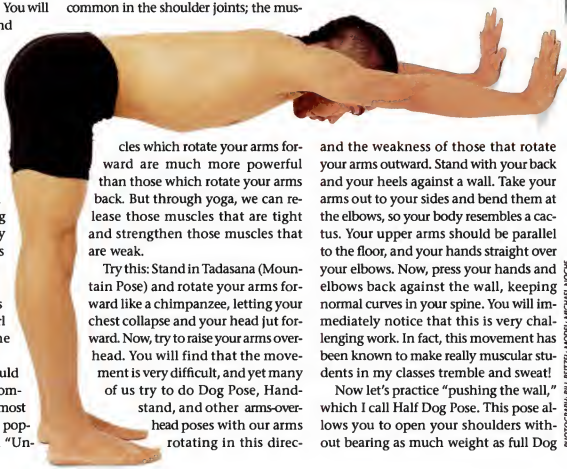
**By Denise Benitez**

Remember the famous photograph of Richard Nixon holding his arms over his head (sort of) with his hands in the peace sign? You can see how difficult it is for him to raise his arms, and how his head juts forward and his chest collapses in order to do so. His clothing doesn't help. Look at a man's suit jacket on the hanger—the rounded upper back posture and forward rotation of the arms is built right into the garment! The culture of fashion portrays imbalance in the young and beautiful as well: Pick up any fashion magazine and look at the posture of the models. You will find their arms rolled forward and chests collapsed.

Fashion may predispose us to shoulder tightness, but there are often anatomical and even emotional causes. The rounded upper back, head forward, arms rolling forward posture can be the physical manifestation of despair and grief. It's important, in this case, not to blame or push yourself. When I was going through a period of grief in my life, I could only practice Child's Pose (Pindasana) for many months, and that was the right thing to do at that time. All of us have times when we need to curl into ourselves, retreat from the world, and heal.

But in general, most of us could bring more balance into this complicated area of our bodies. And most of us are aware of this. The most popular workshop I teach is called "Untying Your Wings: Freeing Your Shoulder Joints." The shoulder joint, unlike the hip joint, does not have a deep bony support structure; the bone structures around this joint are shallow. The joint is supported primarily by muscles and ligaments. This gives us a great opportunity to create change in these joints, but also makes it easy to injure or displace it.

The principles of physical therapy hold that movement will always follow the path of least resistance, even if that path is not the most balanced for the joint. Unbalanced movement is very common in the shoulder joints; the muscles which rotate your arms forward are much more powerful than those which rotate your arms back. But through yoga, we can release those muscles that are tight and strengthen those muscles that are weak.



Try this: Stand in Tadasana (Mountain Pose) and rotate your arms forward like a chimpanzee, letting your chest collapse and your head jut forward. Now, try to raise your arms overhead. You will find that the movement is very difficult, and yet many of us try to do Dog Pose, Handstand, and other arms-overhead poses with our arms rotating in this direction. Now try this: Stand in Tadasana and extend your arms straight out to the sides. Turn your palms up, rotate your little fingers up to the ceiling and your thumbs down to the floor by rotating your upper arms out. Now, raise your arms overhead, keeping your shoulder blades pressing into your back, and the bones of your arms extending towards your hands. You will notice a big difference in the ability of your arms to extend overhead with external rotation.

Here is another experiment which will make you aware of the strength of the muscles which rotate your arms forward, and the weakness of those that rotate your arms outward. Stand with your back and your heels against a wall. Take your arms out to your sides and bend them at the elbows, so your body resembles a cactus. Your upper arms should be parallel to the floor, and your hands straight over your elbows. Now, press your hands and elbows back against the wall, keeping normal curves in your spine. You will immediately notice that this is very challenging work. In fact, this movement has been known to make really muscular students in my classes tremble and sweat!

Now let's practice "pushing the wall," which I call Half Dog Pose. This pose allows you to open your shoulders without bearing as much weight as full Dog

Pose, and lessens the effects of tight hamstrings on the alignment of your back.

Place your hands onto a wall at the height of your pelvis so your back is parallel to the floor. Place your heels under your sitting bones. Spread your fingers. If you are a member of the Tight Hamstring Club, your back may round toward the ceiling in this position; bring your hands higher on the wall, until your spine can extend. If you are flexible in your hamstrings but tight in your shoulders, your spine may arch down toward the floor; lift your kidneys up into your back so your spine extends. Don't hang into the back of your shoulder joints. Instead, lengthen through both the front and back of your armpits.

Now look at your hands on the wall. It's very common for one hand (usually the tighter shoulder) to be higher than the other, or for one hand to be turned out. Let your longest fingers point up to the ceiling and press the weight into the base of your index finger.

Activating the muscles that rotate your arms outward in this position is important if you want to create balance in your joints. To do this, isometrically squeeze your elbows towards one another and try to rotate your elbow creases up toward the ceiling, without actually bending your elbows. Let your shoulder blades sink into your back, and keep your rib cage wide to support the breath. Extend the bones of your arms into the wall and your sitting bones away from the wall, as if you are in a James Bond movie, resisting walls pushing in on you from two directions.

The actions in this pose are dynamic, intentional, and strong. However, your face can be soft, and the strength can be fluid and moving like a river. This wall push practice will prepare you to practice Dog Pose, Handstands, Headstands, and other arms-overhead poses with more ease. And balance in your shoulder joints will allow you to spread your wings in your daily life with full grace and power. ◆

*The founder of Seattle Yoga Arts, Denise Benitez has studied yoga for more than 25 years. She has studied primarily in the Iyengar tradition of hatha yoga, but is also informed by many other traditions of yoga, human movement, and spirituality.*




# A Case for Cross-Training

*If your yoga practice has stalled or you've gotten injured, cross-training may be the solution.*

**By Phillip Moffitt**



One of sports' major innovations in the last 20 years has been the use of cross-training to enhance strength, flexibility, and neuro-motor skills. For competitive athletes, yoga is probably the most common choice. Marathon runners do yoga to relieve lower back strain and strengthen weak psoas muscles, while cyclists will turn to yoga as a solution for overly tight calf muscles and shortened Achilles tendons. Athletes of every type use yoga to rehabilitate from injury and to increase the body's range of motion. Although it's not at all unusual to encounter one or more of these athletes in a yoga class, rarely do you ever hear a yoga instructor suggesting cross-training. Nevertheless, even a small amount of concentrated cross-training can significantly enrich your yoga practice and may be just what you need to get beyond a particular limitation you're now experiencing.

One reason cross-training isn't talked about in yoga classes is that many teachers assert it's redundant because yoga is all-inclusive. In one sense they're right; yoga's breadth and depth is what makes it so powerful for those of us devoted to it. But if you're like most yoga students, you're probably dealing with time limitations, and you have other priorities. Therefore, cross-training can help you leverage a little extra time into a big gain in your yoga experience. Think of it as a way to address the movement limitations in your body or to more fully articulate movements with your body in yoga. This isn't a theoretical benefit, nor vague in effect, rather, it's practical, specific, and should yield detectable results in a short period of time.

I first discovered the benefits of cross-training when I took up aikido after 15 years of practicing yoga. Aikido is a martial art that stresses balance and harmony instead of conflict, and teaches you to blend with an attacker's energy so that no one is harmed. I quickly realized that the emphasis the aikido instructors put on establishing a base in the lower body directly translated into the standing postures in yoga. In finding my base, I was able to create much more ease of movement in my spine.

While studying various somatic disciplines for re-educating the body, including Randy Cherner's Somatic Education, Feldenkrais, Kathy Kain's trauma work, Continuum, and Somatic Psychology, I came to understand how all conscious movement is deeply connected. In the field of somatics, this is referred to as "being in the body" or having a "felt sense of the body." In aikido it's described as having "dropped attention," meaning that you're living in your whole body and not just your head. When I started bringing this new understanding back into my yoga practice, I discovered a new freedom; suddenly I could do Triangle Pose with all my arm joints opening from the center of my spine. Better still, when I walk, my arms move more freely because I'm no longer holding in my shoulders. This is cross-training at its best. Not only can it enhance your yoga practice, it can also give you a sense of being in

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### Getting Unstuck

There are three situations which call for cross-training. The first is when you're simply stuck in some aspect of your yoga practice, backbends for instance. You've tried repeatedly for more than a year to experience a full backbend (Urdvha Dhanurasana), and it just isn't happening. It may be that you lack movement in the mid-thoracic spine, meaning that you do all the work in your legs, your lower spine compresses while the midspine stays tight, preventing the shoulders from opening. Naturally your lower back feels the strain, and your wrists start to ache after a few attempts, or you have to place blocks under your hands to be able to get started.

One solution is to work with a Pilates instructor who has a movement or rehabilitation background. The main focus of Pilates is to access the deep muscles of the pelvic floor and axial skeleton providing stability so that the head, arms, and legs are free to move in space. Working with a piece of Pilates equipment called a Reformer that's something akin to a rowing bench, you can learn to facilitate movement throughout your spine. The instructor will have you bend your knees and place your feet on a metal bar at the end of the bench. Using force generated from your pelvis, you then push your feet against the bar, straightening the legs. As you do this, the bench moves away from the bar, and your spine lengthens.

The instructor will also have you do Downward-Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana) while standing on the Reformer with your hands on the bar and your feet against the shoulder rest. As you pull your legs back under your hips, the bench slides back and forth. The movement of the bench teaches you to use the core muscles in the center of your body. Both of these exercises will help you learn to differentiate your vertebrae and allow movement from the pelvis to the back of your head.

### Coping with Injuries

The second reason to cross-train is to treat injuries. When you are injured, swimming or water aerobics may be a safer and quicker approach to rehabilitation than yoga because water bears the weight of the body. I've worked with a number of people who have repaired a knee injury with swimming. They report that swimming builds up the muscles around the knee so the ligaments and cartilage receive less strain. Shoulders are somewhat different; a torn rotator cuff can cycle through being mildly irritated, then seeming well, only to become really painful. Yoga is great for opening the shoulders, but swimming or doing pull-ups with a Gravitron machine (which allows you to steadily increase the amount of weight you place on the shoulders) can provide crucial space enhancement in the shoulder joint. Once there is sufficient space in the shoulder joint, you

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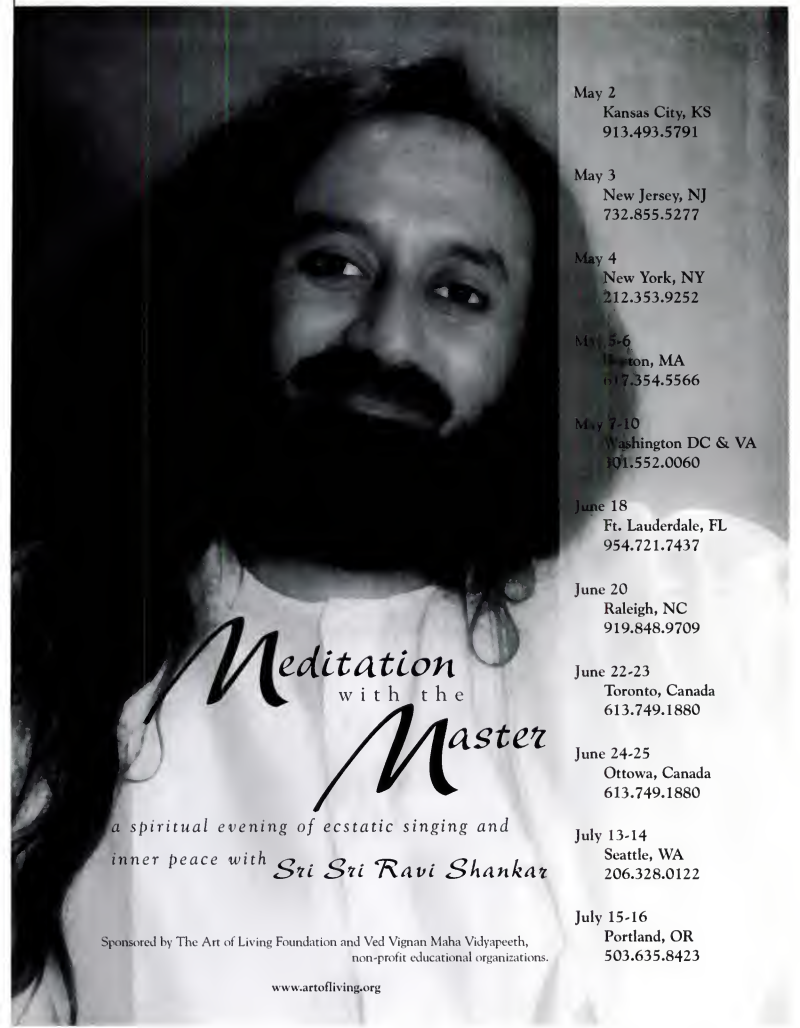
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can use Downward-Facing Dog to complete the rehabilitation.

A different kind of injury that can limit movement in yoga is one in which the trauma that was inflicted onto the neuromuscular system becomes habituated or locked into the body. To understand this locked-in habit, imagine being startled by a loud, unexpected sound at night—the back of the neck shortens, shoulders rise, stomach tenses, and teeth clench. Then you realize it was just a book falling off a table, and your body relaxes. With traumatic injury the relaxation response never happens. It's as though the nervous system becomes so overloaded that it forgets what is a normal range of movement in a muscle or group of muscles. What was a natural momentary response to fear and pain becomes the definition of what's possible. These locked-in, startled responses often occur with automobile injuries, abrupt falls, or when fear accompanies a sudden blow or strain in the body. It can also happen when you override your body after an injury and force it to do a movement that's harmful to the tissue.

This type of injury is widespread and often unrecognized; many simply learn

***Many yoga teachers aren't versed in other somatic disciplines. Determining what's an effective cross-training program for your particular body requires some exploration.***

to work around it. Some indicators are chronic pain, unusual limited movement, failure of a part of the body to respond in yoga after repeatedly working with it, shortness of breath, and hypertonicity in a specific muscle or tissue. In this case, the proper form of cross-training is somatic education.

"Soma" means the subjective experience of being in the body. Someone trained in the somatic work of Thomas Hanna, Feldenkrais Functional Integration, Randy Cherner's Somatic Education, Ortho-Bionomy, or Peter Levine's trauma work can help you literally re-educate your mind-body system. You will be given both hands-on adjustments and movement practice to help you release the constricting pattern.

Somatic education can dramatically affect your range and ease of motion by creating an awareness of your movement patterns. For instance, while doing yoga you may be flexing while trying to do a pose that actually calls for extending, unknowingly creating constriction. Once the restriction is released, you may experience feelings of rejuvenation, freedom, and renewed hope, as well as improvement in your yoga and other body movement.

### Deepening Your Practice

The third reason to cross-train is to deepen your yoga practice, making it


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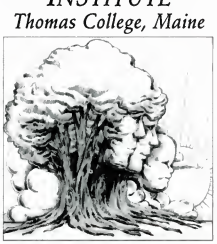
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a more meaningful and profound inner experience. For instance, going to a Continuum movement class or a dance class can teach you something about your body that you can carry over into your yoga practice. Most yoga instructors are so focused on teaching you to work your muscles that they fail to emphasize the importance of staying relaxed.

Taking a class based on the work of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, the Alexander Technique, or Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement can teach you how to generate movement while keeping your body relaxed.

Each of these practices offers its own knowledge and teaches you a different approach to the soma. A new experience of the body can make clear to you what has been obscure in your yoga movements.

A creative solution to chronic problems is to approach them using three different modalities. For example, if you unconsciously hold your sacrum when you walk, it can be very difficult to bring about change because your daily movement pattern may undo all the good work you are doing with yoga. But if you combine yoga with somatic movement and Pilates work, you'll start to experience the sacrum in such depth that it becomes accessible to you.

### Finding the Right Cross-Trainer

Unfortunately, many yoga teachers aren't versed in other somatic disciplines and lack a good grounding in principles of movement. Therefore, determining what's an effective cross-training program for your particular body requires some exploration. Whether you choose to work with a personal trainer, swimming instructor, or even a physical therapist, ask yourself if you feel as though they're comfortable in their own body, whether you will have fun working with them, and whether they show respect towards you or condescension. Many weight trainers, dance instructors, and somatic and movement professionals who have impressive body skills in performance unconsciously display obvious alienation from their own bodies when not in training. Always go with what feels right to your body when you're doing cross-training, and allow it to make the decision to continue or stop.

Finally, a word of caution. George Leonard, aikido sensei and author of *Mastery*, warns his students repeatedly about the danger of becoming a "dabbler," the type of person who enthusiastically tries out new disciplines but then never develops dedication. Don't switch from yoga to some cross-training activity thinking to yourself that it's really what you've wanted all along. Yoga means "to yoke," "to create union," so use these other disciplines in just this manner. They represent a wedge into your stuck places, and you're combining one or more of them to be more fully united in body and mind. Yoga then becomes the expression of this union and your practice takes on new meaning. ◆

*Phillip Moffitt is the founder and president of the Life Balance Institute, a nonprofit organization based in Belvedere, California, devoted to the study of the mind-body relationship in both inner growth and organizational leadership. He teaches hatha yoga, vipassana meditation, and somatic education, and has a black belt in aikido. He's coauthor of* The Power to Heal *(Prentice Hall, 1990) and* Medicine's Great Journey: One Hundred Years of Healing *(Little, Brown and Company, 1992).*

#### RESOURCES

*Mastery: The Keys to Success and Long-Term Fulfillment* by George Leonard (Plume, 1991).

*The Wisdom of the Body Moving: An Introduction to Body-Mind Centering* by Linda Hartley (North Atlantic Books, 1995).

*Sensing, Feeling, and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering* by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (North Atlantic Books, 1994).

*Groundworks: Narratives of Embodiment*, edited by Don Hanlon Johnson (North Atlantic Books, 1997).

*Elusive Obvious* by Moshe Feldenkrais (Meta Publications, 1981).

*Somatics: Reawakening the Mind's Control of Movement, Flexibility, and Health* by Thomas Hanna (Addison-Wesley, 1988).

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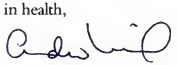

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# Yogis Tee Off

*By throwing your goals off the fairway and practicing being present in the process, you can play a better golf game.*

**By Baron Baptiste & Kathleen Finn Mendola**



Perhaps no game is more wrought with mental hazards than golf. The sport introduces a constant struggle between the conscious mind—analyzing, alert, logical—and the subconscious mind—the well of intuition and long-term memory. Though golf fundamentals like body stance and stroke are learned in the conscious mind, they are stored in the nether regions of the subconscious.

This clash between subconscious and conscious mind presents an opportunity for the awakened athlete to override the mental strife created by the overanalyzing conscious mind and reach toward the wakeful, clear mind state accessible through the intuitive subconscious.

Golfers who don't learn the nuances of the mental game of golf remain frustrated or give up before mastering the sport. Yet by incorporating elements of yoga practice, you can develop the mental discipline that golf demands.

## The Flow of Concentration

The breadth and depth of available instruction contributes to golf's reputation as an intensely mental game. Detailed videos and books on the science of the game abound, and golf's one-on-one coaching is considered incomparable to other sports. Yet all the instruction in the world won't help you if you allow stress to seep into your game.

When dedicated golfers are making progress, hitting the ball well, and feeling on top of their game, they're "in the zone"—a state of being athletes reach where thought is suspended and focus and concentration are heightened. Many golfers invariably bring in the element of performance pressure and wham!—being in zone disappears. The conscious, analyzing mind steps in and they begin to think their technique is faulty. They tell themselves they have to practice more, hit harder, and correct their imperfections.

In these cases, it's usually not faulty technique but the stress of negative self-talk that disrupts the flow of concentration, and therefore, impairs the physical aspects of the game. In his book, *Training a Tiger: A Father's Guide to Raising a Winner in Golf and Life* (HarperCollins, 1998), Earl Woods, father of golf great Tiger Woods, reminds his son, "If you don't clutter your conscious mind with endless pointers and tips, you make it easier for your subconscious instincts to guide you."

This is not to say that you can ignore the physical game. There's always a need to practice, learn the fundamentals, and focus on technique. However, there also comes a time to let it all go and let the subconscious take over, allowing hours of practice and experience—your long-term memories—to flow through you. Then, you can move beyond logical thinking to intuitive, "thoughtless" action.

Freeing the subconscious is contingent upon the body's ability to relax. When you've entered a deep state of relaxation, you're able to experience the "now" and your mind becomes clear. You know how to react or not react by anchoring yourself internally. When your mental chatter quiets, you're able to approach your golf game with focus and awareness.

## Throwing Away Your Goals

Focus is the last word you would use when observing clichéd images of the frustrated golfer: heaving golf clubs, making vehement self-incriminatory remarks, swearing, and throwing temper tantrums that would rival those of a 2-year-old.

PHOTOGRAPH: CORBIS



*I see things as they* **can be,** *not as they are.*

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*Think of the possibilities. . .*

These golfers are outcome-focused, under self-imposed pressure to meet their goals, whether that's hitting a bogey, a par, a birdie, or striving to lower their handicap. They are intensely attached to the game and their results. By throwing your goals off the fairway and practicing being present in the process, you can free yourself of stress, and ironically, play a better golf game.

Legend speaks of a group of Zen monks who practice archery for hours on end attempting to master the physical components of the game. Once they achieve this mastery, they toss away their bows and arrows. They're not attached to the game. They're not attached to winning or achieving a particular score. They use sport merely as a tool for reaching a state of consciousness.

Before you throw out your golf clubs, call on your yoga practice to help you connect with the body and breath, and thus, the various sensations that occur at each moment. Observe your breath to invite feelings of nonattachment, nonjudgment, and presence. Pay attention to physical sensations, pain and stiffness, or ease of movement, using the body like a ground wire for the mind.

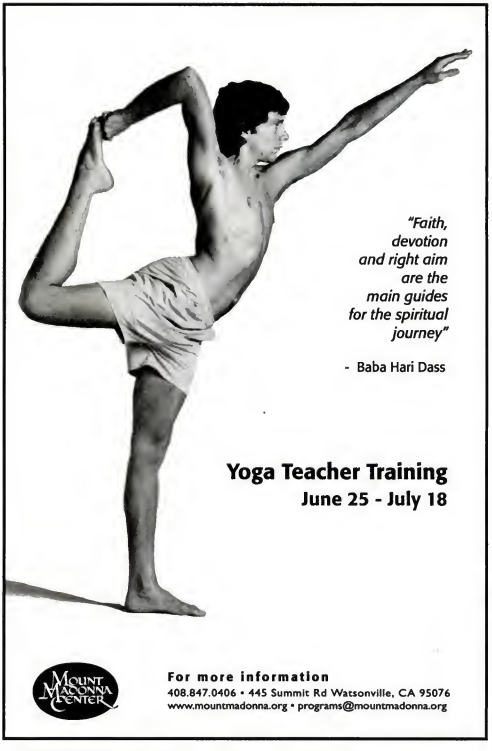
By connecting to the subtleties of breath, you clear the conscious mind. Light shines on your path, and you're able to see and act with clarity. Without any expectation of outcome, all natural resources can flow forth from the storage house of the subconscious and play through the body like wind through a flute.

### The Physical Game

In order to reach the mental peak of your game, you need the instrument of your body to be well-tuned.

A strong, stable body that is fluid and flexible creates the foundation for a healthy, injury-free athlete. Consider a lone tree whipping in the winds of a hurricane. A brittle, stiff tree will crack and fall, while a fluid, flexible tree will bend and lean, ultimately withstanding the fiercest of storms.

For many, flexibility, or fluidity, may

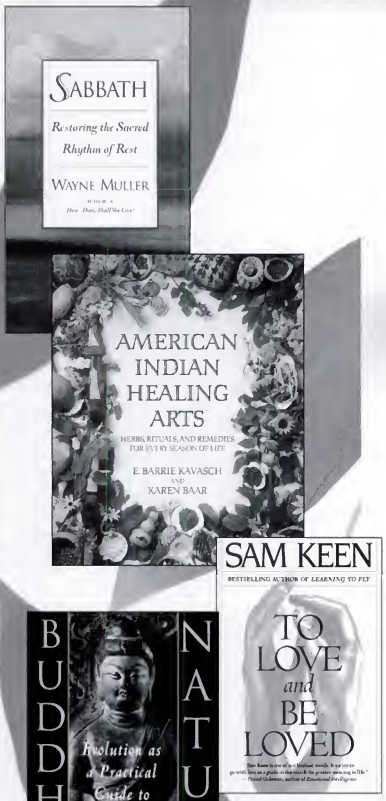



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be more difficult to achieve than strength and stability. Internal and external stressors can block energy in the body, limiting range of motion and causing your body structure to be off center. An off-kilter stance may manifest in the golfer as a stroke that's off by a fraction of an inch. Power, balance, and weight transfer all depend on fluidity in the body.

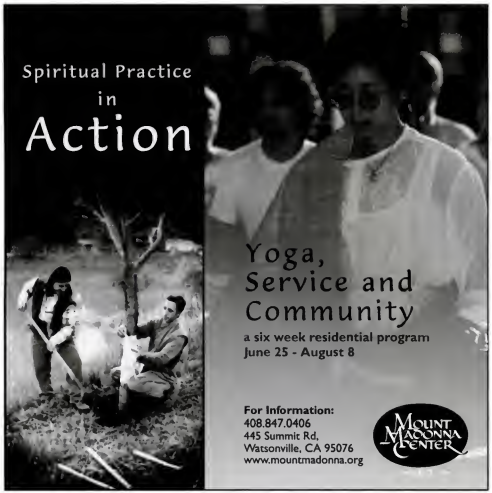
Due to the fact that golfers swing from one side of the body, there is asymmetry inherent in the sport. Overtraining and repetitive motion manifests as larger muscles on one side of a golfer's body; specifically, the shoulders, biceps, forearms, and upper back will be more developed on a golfer's dominant side. These stronger muscles are also tighter, while the weaker muscles are more flexible. The tight muscles, in turn, restrict the free movement of surrounding muscles, ultimately leading to limited range of motion.

A symmetrical golf stroke is not only going to be more accurate and go farther, it is also going to produce less strain on the body. To create more equality on both sides of the body, golfers need to hold strengthening poses on the weaker side of the body and opening poses on the stronger, yet tighter, side of the body. This is in addition to a regular yoga program of poses performed equally on both sides (see "Asanas for Your Game," p. 38).

Striving toward symmetry and balance is the essence of a yoga program, which breaks down tension the body has learned to work around. It is an intuitive process that takes practice to develop, much like a good golf game.

A balanced body is a flexible body, and flexibility remains the cornerstone of a good golf game. As Earl Woods tells his son, "What you're looking for is a soft, flexible, fluid swing—that's power." ◆

*Baron Baptiste is a yoga teacher and athletic trainer in Cambridge, Massachusetts, known for his work with the Philadelphia Eagles and as the host of ESPN's "Cyberfit." Kathleen Finn Mendola is a health and wellness writer based in Portland, Oregon.*






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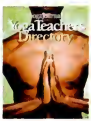
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**While it's not a cure for cancer, yoga enhances physical and emotional wellness—and brings a peace many patients had thought they'd lost forever.**

# Yoga *for* Cancer

Fog softens the contours of the laurel tree, the white trunks of birches, the spiky holly tree that stands at the entrance to the Holly Tree Inn where the Ting-Sha Cancer Retreat is held. It's 5 p.m., and the participants make their way from the hot tub and massage room, or from the art studio, or from the trail next to the stream that winds through the woods, across the lawn to the yellow-frame bed and breakfast. We are not the usual guests, vacationers come to savor the peace and pleasure of this spot an hour's drive north of San Francisco.

We arrive at the house and enter the large ground-floor room: nine women and men, aged 30 to 75, one of us from as far away as Memphis. We enter quietly and arrange ourselves for meditation. Some of us, needing to lean, place pillows behind our backs and under our knees, and wrap ourselves in blankets.

Seated facing us is a narrow-bodied, tall woman with large eyes radiating kindness behind her glasses. Virginia Veach, our yoga instructor, is the director of the Ting-Sha Institute, the retreat's sponsor.

**BY SANDY BOUCHER**





"It's in these moments of silence or relaxation that healing occurs," Virgina tells us. "Yoga, meditation, and relaxation are ways to quiet our minds. Relaxation is a state of openness and readiness. It is neither tension nor flaccidity, but availability for movement."

As we rise to begin the yoga postures, I glance at the other participants. Lois, a redhead in her early 30s and mother of two children, struggles with a rare form of leukemia. Eileen, a musician, holds herself carefully, mindful of the cancer in her spine. Three of the women have had breast cancer: Lucy, a commanding woman from the deep South; Janet from San Francisco, who has masses of thick hair and a whimsical, determined attitude that serves her well in her wholly alternative care for her cancer; and Ann, a slender, charming psychotherapist and mother of grown sons, who moves slowly, debilitated by the chemotherapy she has just received. Arnold, our oldest, most enthusiastically vigorous and life-affirming member, slips on his artificial leg, the result of an inebriated motorcycle ride many years ago. Now he faces bone metastasis from his prostate cancer. Ruth and Jake, a young married couple, are learning how to deal with her lymphoma and preparing for a bone marrow transplant. And I, a survivor of colon cancer, am seeking to put my life back together and understand what happened to me.

Virginia guides us in a standing posture. She turns our attention to the breath, saying, "At the end of your exhale, feel a tiny release and let yourself relax more deeply into the posture."

Glancing at Lois, Virginia talks about pain. "If you're on chemo or if you have bone metastasis or tumors, you may be experiencing pain. Please don't do anything that hurts, and don't push into pain."

Now she asks us to sit on the floor, one leg out to the side, the other bent into the groin, and, lifting our arms, to bend along our outstretched leg. "Again, breathe in and out, and at the end of your exhale, feel that there is a little bit of give, and move with it."

Lois straightens up, her face distressed.

"What is it?" Virginia asks.

"My spleen is enlarged, and I feel like I'm squeezing it when I bend over."

"Does it hurt?"

"Yes."

"Then don't do this. Or maybe try bending just a little without lifting your arms. And stop if it's painful."

Lois tries again, frowning.

"What's going on now?" asks Virginia.

"Hurts," replies the redhead.

"Then try lying down and see what the openness will bring."

Lois sighs as she surrenders to her mat.

After a few minutes Virginia turns her attention to Lois again. "How is your breathing now?" she asks. "Is there more possibility for an inner quiet and rest?"



Virginia leads us in several more gentle postures, then has us lie on our backs. She comes to each person and covers him or her with a blanket. Draping the blanket at my feet, she unrolls it gently up over my legs and chest. Then she leans to tuck the soft cotton knit around my shoulders.

As we lie under our coverings, Virgina guides us to experience our toes, our calves, our knees, up the fronts of our bodies, then down the backs. Somewhere near pelvis level, I sink away into sleep.

When I awaken, my compatriots are chuckling and talking about the "sparkles" and tingles they had experienced in their chests and then throughout their bodies in the breathing exercises. I turn my head to see Virginia Veach smiling in the front of the room. "Those sparkles are *prana*," she tells us, "life energy—healing energy."

## "Negotiating" Cancer

Yoga is but one component of the Ting-Sha Institute Cancer Retreat, a stress reduction, health education, and group support program for people with cancer and

PHOTOGRAPH: ANNE HAMERSKY

their family members or close friends. The retreat also provides a delicious vegetarian, low-fat diet; the participants have three massages during the week; they are encouraged to express their feelings in art and poetry; and they're given information that will allow them to make choices for their care. We gather in group sessions to explore the issues raised by a life-threatening illness and to build support for each other in the time to come.

At Ting-Sha I begin to see that disease can be "negotiable." I realize that we can learn new ways to visualize, respond to, and work with our disease and the often difficult therapies that cancer patients endure. A Ting-Sha brochure given to participants quotes Alec Forbes, M.D., of the Bristol Cancer Help Centre in England, who says that through our own efforts and with the help of professionals and our community, we can become "well cancer patients," who still have cancer but are fighting it from a state of much better health, with generally improved results.

The care given at Ting-Sha and other cancer-help centers around the country is grounded in theories of stress management derived from several decades of scientific research. A solid body of experimental studies has demonstrated that stress influences the immune system and contributes to the development and progress of immune-based diseases such as cancer and AIDS. As early as 1962, an article in the journal *Cancer Research* reported the beneficial effects of stress reduction on laboratory animals injected with cancer. In the 35-plus years since, the empirical evidence has piled up. A landmark 1989 study by Stanford psychiatrist David Spiegel found that women with metastatic breast cancer who participated in a support group lived longer than those who did not. The group support was seen to protect against or lessen stress. Likewise, yoga, breathing exercises, and meditation can reduce stress and promote healing. Indeed, even the American Cancer Society, in its Web site (www.cancer.org), notes that yoga—which it describes as a "complementary therapy…not a treatment for any disease"—can "reduce levels of stress and bring about feelings of relaxation and well-being…[and] enhance quality of life for some patients with cancer."

The notion that cancer is "negotiable" offers revolutionary possibilities for a patient struggling to survive. From this perspective, life-threatening illness can become not just something to be endured and prayed about until it either goes away or kills us, but a challenge to take control of our lives. Instead of being stuck with a few grim options, in the strange and frightening territory where patients find themselves suddenly exiled at diagnosis, we can develop some self-empowering ways to meet and live with illness. And health practitioners who work with cancer patients can help us learn how not to run away from our cancer but to live with it while we must; if trained in the appropriate disciplines, they can teach us to strengthen the immune system so we can soften the worst effects of both the illness and the treatments.

**Life-threatening illness** can become not just something to be endured and prayed about, but a challenge to **take control of our lives.**

## Relax into Healing

Traditionally, yoga's power to bring deliverance from pain and sorrow comes as the student learns to work with his or her senses and intellect. While the practices of yoga, as codified by the Indian master Patanjali centuries ago, classically begin with ethics and self-purification, the cancer patient probably benefits initially

# Where *to* Turn *for* Help: Cancer Resources

## Retreat Programs

- **Commonweal Cancer Help Program;** P.O. Box 316; Bolinas, CA 94924; Coordinator: Waz Thomas; (415) 868-0970; www.commonweal.org

*Other programs modeled on Commonweal:*

- **Ting-Sha Institute Cancer Retreat;** P.O. Box 226; Point Reyes Station, CA 94956; Director: Virginia Veach, Ph.D.; phone/fax (415) 663-1190; www.e-media.com/tingsha
- **Smith Farm Center for the Healing Arts;** 1229 15th St., N.W.; Washington, D.C. 20005; Executive Director: Shanti Norris; (202) 483-8600; fax (202) 483-8601; SmithFarm1@AOL.com; www.smithfarm.com
- **Harmony Hill;** A Wellness Learning Center on Hood Canal; 7362 East SR106; Union, Washington 98592; Executive Director: Gretchen Schodde; (360) 898-2363; fax (360) 898-2364; harmonyh@halcyon.com; www.harmonyhill.org
- **Oka Mana Ka Ho'ola;** Life Is In Your Spiritual Power; P.O. Box 1236; Kamuela, Hawaii 96743; Program Director: Noni Kuhns; (808) 885-6777; fax (808) 885-4998; future2@aloha.net
- **Callanish Healing Retreats;** #314-2902 W. Broadway; Vancouver, B.C.; Canada V6K 2G8; (604) 732-1012; fax (604) 739-1800; info@callanish.org; www.callanish.org

## Other Therapeutic Resources

- **The International Association of Yoga Therapists** (recently merged with the Yoga Research and Education Center); Trisha Lamb; (707) 928-9898; fax (707) 928-4738; yogaresrch@aol.com
- **Breast Cancer Personal Support and Lifestyle Integration Program;** 2330 Post St., Ste. 510; San Francisco, CA 94115; (415) 885-7877
- **"Living Fully After Cancer Diagnosis;"** The New York Cancer Help Program; Director: Susan Halpern; (212) 662-0875; shalp55@aol.com

## Books, Reports, & Pamphlets

- Lerner, Michael, Ph.D. *Choices in Healing: Integrating the Best of Conventional and Complementary Approaches to Cancer* (MIT Press, 1996). A comprehensive description of healing therapies, both mainstream and complementary, also pain control and dying. Emphasis on complementary therapies.
- Lasater, Judith, Ph.D., P.T. *Relax and Renew: Restful Yoga for Stressful Times* (Rodmell Press, 1995). "Restorative yoga"—easy postures, many supported with pillows and rolled-up blankets.
- Remen, Rachel Naomi, M.D. *Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal* (Riverhead, 1996). Stories addressing spiritual issues, suffering, meaning, love, faith, mystery, and miracles, drawn from Dr. Remen's extensive experience with her own patients.
- Moss, Ralph W., Ph.D. *The Moss Reports.* Moss, an internationally acclaimed expert on integrating conventional and alternative cancer treatments, has prepared reports on every major kind of cancer and many rarer forms. The reports list relevant experts and hospitals; the cost includes follow-up information and monthly telephone updates. For more information or to order a report, contact: The Moss Reports, 144 St. John's Place, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217; (718) 636-4433; fax (718) 636-0186. Visit the Web site www.ralphmoss.com for a list of available reports and sample excerpts.
- Institute for Health & Healing Library (A Planetree Library). A medical library for the general public. The collection contains current professional medical literature, popular health publications, and alternative therapy resources, as well as directories for locating support groups, health professionals and health organizations, and health-related CD-ROM databases, audiotapes, and videotapes. The library may be used, free of charge, Tuesdays through Saturdays 11 a.m.–5 p.m. (Wednesdays until 7 p.m.). The library also offers a research service; the cost (per topic) ranges from $35-$50 for a computer-searched bibliography to $125 for an in-depth information packet. Reports can be ordered and received by mail. Call (415) 923-3680 (recorded info), (415) 923-3681 (direct line), or fax (415) 673-2629. Or write to Institute for Health and Healing Library, 2040 Webster Street, San Francisco, CA 94115.

## Tapes from Commonweal

- Video: *Choices in Cancer* Michael Lerner, Ph.D. Information to help patients shape their own healing, pain control, and dying.
- Audio: *Community and Communion: Four Talks on the Psychospiritual Needs of People with Cancer* with Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D.
- Lists of single tapes and tape sets are available from Commonweal.

from the asanas themselves. These poses are designed to exercise every muscle, nerve, and gland in the body. Refined over centuries, the postures precisely address the tension, holding, and sometimes blockage of energy in any particular joint or organ. When the tension is released, energy can flow more easily in the body and allow patients to experience a sense of well-being and strength—a balance of body, mind, and spirit.

Healing requires a slowing down, a relaxation of tension—both the tightness and holding of the body and the mind's incessant worrying and thinking ahead to dreadful possibilities. But this seems an almost impossible task. While acute stress has the effect of *stimulating* the cells that protect our system (if attacked by a lion, we would experience a very high level of tension and attendant physical changes that would promote our chances for survival), chronic stress—the kind of daily worry and pressure that a cancer patient typically experiences—markedly *depresses* the function of the natural "killer cells" that protect, thus leaving us even more vulnerable to our disease. The growth of tumors and other cancer indicators have all been shown to be exacerbated by stress.

Most of us are so used to being tense that we are not even conscious of our tightness. If cancer is detected in your body, the news itself raises your anxiety level tremendously. Then, in quick succession, you prepare to undergo surgery and are given a debilitating course of chemotherapy and/or radiation. What could be more frightening? How are we to relax in the midst of the most stressful thing that has ever happened to us? How can we bypass the anxiety and despair that cause us to tighten up and turn away from life, and learn to recognize and pursue more positive possibilities?

As if to answer these questions, Ann Getzoff, sitting in the garden at the Ting-Sha retreat, talks about her experience with yoga. "I consider the yoga class a lifesaver. When I was sickest from the treatments, yoga was the one steady thing I could do, no matter what. When I couldn't even commit to going to a movie because I wasn't sure I could sit up for an hour and a half, still I could go to yoga and do the postures."

Ann has been living with illness for a year, undergoing intensive radiation and chemotherapy treatments for Stage IIIB breast cancer, knowing the statistics give her only a 40 percent chance of surviving the next five years. Extremely thin, her hair just barely growing back, she says she does many complementary therapies in support of standard medical procedures.

Ann had been doing yoga for 20 years, most recently in a class in Santa Cruz, California, led by Teri Mehegan. But when she began the radical radiation and chemotherapy treatments, her strength declined so much that "sometimes I had to drag myself into the yoga class and just lie on the floor. Teri knew what was happening with me and always greeted me with a big hug and a few loving words. Sometimes, she would acknowledge me verbally during class by saying, 'You may not want to do this, Ann,' or 'You might want to do the posture *this* way, Ann.' When she came around to adjust people, she might pat me or help me get into an easier position. Then as each class progressed and I did the postures, it was amazing how strong I would feel. During the rest of my day, I could barely stand up, barely walk, but I would be able to hold the Triangle Pose, for instance, for as long as everyone else! The only way I can explain that is that yoga awakened my energy, and maybe I was getting energy from the other people there too." Yoga, she adds, "was a very important part of my healing."

> "When I was sickest from the treatments, **yoga was the one steady thing I could do,** no matter what."

"How do you think the healing occurs?" I ask.

Ann pauses for a moment, then says, "It happens on three levels. On the physical, the yoga gives me increased energy; on the psychological level, I always feel acknowledged and even cherished, mostly by the instructor but also by the other students; and spiritually, it gives me a time to reflect, to go inside." Ann describes the inward, quiet time at the end of the

session—when the students lie still and Teri leads them in a short meditation—as invaluable.

My own experience echoes Ann's. When I was most ill and depleted from chemotherapy treatments, I attended a body-movement class. Always, no matter how terrible I had felt upon entering the session, I would leave feeling centered and energized. I began to believe that no matter how sick we may be—in pain, nauseated, exhausted, diseased—there is within us a healthy body or a healthy *being*. For many cancer patients, yoga offers techniques that allow us to support and awaken this vital part of ourselves.

## A Skeptic Signs On

Many medical doctors tend to dismiss the beneficial effects of yoga and meditation, opting to stay within the safe though limited enclave of conventional medical practices. Sometimes it is only the crisis of his or her own incurable cancer that can bring a doctor to the yoga mat. A few years ago, Dr. William Fair was one such skeptic. But, as an October 26, 1998 *New Yorker* article reported, he now incorporates complementary therapies—including yoga and meditation, vitamins, and a high-soy, low-fat diet—to help him live with his own incurable colon cancer.

The epitome of the hard-driving, Type A, highly successful physician, Dr. Fair worked at California's Stanford Medical Center, Washington University in St. Louis, and for 13 years was chairman of the Department of Urology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering in New York, one of the most prestigious cancer hospitals in the country. A top-flight surgeon specializing in cancers of the prostate, bladder, testes, and kidney, he typically performed several surgeries a day at Sloan-Kettering, directed research projects, and administered the department. Reached at his home in Manhattan, Dr. Fair spoke about the alternative practices he now employs in dealing with his own condition.

"Yoga has made a tremendous change in my life!" he claims. He expresses warm enthusiasm for his yoga teacher, Lisa Bennett, of the Yoga Zone, who comes to his house once a week to lead him and his wife in a yoga session that lasts for an hour or more. Just as important is his meditation practice. He meditates every day and can point to junctures in the progress of his disease when meditation gave him crucial support.

While he could see the value of diet and exercise, initially Dr. Fair completely resisted the "California touchy-feely" practices of yoga and meditation. He was introduced to both by Dr. Dean Ornish, the noted proponent of lifestyle changes for heart patients. But Dr. Fair was not convinced that yoga would be helpful for *him*.

After his diagnosis in 1995, Dr. Fair underwent surgery and chemotherapy. He resumed his work schedule, but two years later the tumor recurred, and he was told his chances of surviving had dropped dramatically. "As my choices with conventional therapy diminished," he says, "and I saw that the scientific evidence showed some measurable benefit from yoga and meditation, that was my thrust to get started." At the urging of Dr. Ornish, he went to a retreat at the Commonweal Cancer Help Program near the Northern California coastal town of Bolinas. (The prototype for residential cancer healing programs, Commonweal has spawned Ting-Sha and similar retreats in several states; see "Cancer Resources.") There he learned from yoga teacher Waz Thomas and massage therapist Jnani Chap-

## 5/16/97 A Poem by Rick Fields

On my fifty-fifth birthday
Two years to the day
From my first chemotherapy
I am still alive

Against all odds
They say. To celebrate
I meditate
For half a day
On strange Tibetan deities,
wrathful and peaceful,
who rise and fall
with my breath
in emptiness.

Later in the day
A dip in the chill Pacific.
A wave lifts me up
Churns me down

Then a kayak
In Bolinas Lagoon

Seals pop up
In pairs like us
Curious, inquisitive,
Barking, protective

Two snowy egrets stand
Like sentries on stilts
Long necks coiled
Strike like snakes

Floating aimlessly
Rising and falling
Water flashing
From the curved blades.

What are the odds
Of being here today?
Golden sunlight.
Gentle breeze.
Green hills.
Drifting with the tide
From the rising sea.

*Rick Fields is the former editor-in-chief of* Yoga Journal *and the author or coauthor of numerous books, including* How the Swans Came to the Lake *and* Chop Wood, Carry Water. *This poem is taken from his collection* Fuck You, Cancer & Other Poems *(Crooked Cloud Projects, 48 Shattuck Square, Box 42, Berkeley, CA 94704; $11 ppd.).* *© 1997 Rick Fields. Used by permission.*

man, and took his new regimen back to Manhattan.

"I just love yoga," he says. "It helps my breathing, and gives me better flexibility and more energy." He admits that, true to his high-achiever personality, he began by trying to duplicate the perfect form of young, flexible yoga instructors and wound up frustrated. Bennett urged him to concentrate instead on his breathing as he did the postures. Soon, with her encouragement, he was able to relax in the poses; gradually he stretched and strengthened.

Dr. Fair's daily meditation brings him, he says, to "a whole new outlook on life. Meditation has taught me to keep in mind what's important and what's not." When his cancer recurred in August 1997, he was offered radical chemotherapy that might have shrunk his tumor but would not have eliminated it—and would certainly have made him very ill.

"When you have cancer," he says, "anxiety eats on you. But when I meditate, I'm able to put things in perspective. No one lives forever. The time I have left—how do I want to spend it? This is what I asked myself." His yoga and meditation practice, along with the support of his family, allowed Dr. Fair to make the decision to refuse conventional treatment. Now, as described in the *New Yorker* article, he treats his tumor with Chinese herbs, and continues his yoga and meditation sessions.

"How are you doing?" I ask.

"I'm doing fine!" And he tells me what a good decision it was. "If I had accepted the chemotherapy treatments, I would have spent last year sick and miserable." Instead, he went trekking in Patagonia, learned to scuba dive, and pursued a full professional and personal life.

## Dissolve Tension

Another important dimension for cancer patients is breathwork, or *pranayama*. "Many people who are going through the distress of an illness don't breathe very efficiently," Waz Thomas points out. "But when we optimize breathing, we are bringing into the body not just oxygen, but a much more subtle force. Prana, air, breath—the essential life force. Even if you can't do the postures, you can still benefit from breathing practice."

The term *pranayama* combines *prana*, breath, with *yama*, meaning extension or control, and describes a crucial practice in yoga. This "science of the breath" involves attention to inhalation, exhalation, and retention or holding. Through pranayama, one learns to breathe slowly and deeply, in rhythmic patterns. These patterns strengthen the respiratory system, calm the nervous system, and can reduce our craving for something more to fill our needs.

When we are frightened, we hold our breath or breathe shallowly or raggedly. To open up the chest again, one can practice breathing techniques based on pranayama, such as abdominal breathing, deep breathing, bellows breathing (with forceful abdominal exhalations), and alternate-nostril breathing. (As breath practices can have powerful effects on the body, they should be learned from a qualified yoga instructor, for safety's sake.) Done properly, they can dissolve stress and emotional excitation, freeing the mind from anxiety.

**Yoga prepares the ground for healing** and can give us the physical and mental tools **to access our deepest and most sustaining energy.**

Dr. Fair's breathwork regime includes an exercise in which the belly and chest are expanded, filling the whole torso with air. In another innovative exercise combining breath and visualization, he starts at the base of his spine. As he inhales he visualizes a light moving up his back, vertebra by vertebra; as he exhales, he sees the light coming down the front of his spine; and when it reaches the level of his tumor, he sees the tumor going away.

*continued on page 135*

# He's All That

Admired by many, feared by a few, B.K.S. Iyengar is one of the most talked about personalities in the world of yoga. Although he has his share of critics, no one would dispute that his innovative approach to teaching yoga has revolutionized the way yoga is practiced in America. To that end, we all owe him a debt of gratitude. Since he first brought his brand of yoga to the U.S. in the 1970s, Iyengar Yoga has become the most widely practiced form of hatha yoga in the West, and his book *Light on Yoga* is considered the Bible of asana practice by many. Why have his teachings become so influential? To find out, we asked five leading American Iyengar Yoga instructors to tell us how they have been touched by Iyengar's teachings. All five traveled to Pune, India, last December to celebrate Mr. Iyengar's 80th birthday, and brought back these testimonials.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PABLO BARTHOLOMEW




B.K.S. Iyengar (center) flanked by five of his U.S. emissaries. Clockwise from top right: Patricia Walden, Ramanand Patel, Mary Dunn, Dean Lerner, and John Schumacher.

# Tough Teacher

## By John Schumacher

I made my seventh trip to Pune this past December. The primary reason was to honor my teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar, on his 80th birthday. I also had hopes of having classes with him, although when I signed up there were no guarantees that he would teach. He fulfilled my wish by teaching all seven of the scheduled three-hour asana classes and one of the pranayama classes as well. In addition, he conducted question and answer sessions and gave talks on subjects ranging from practical methods of doing asanas to the intricacies of yoga philosophy. His stamina was awesome, and he still had the best backbends in the place.

I've been studying with Mr. Iyengar since 1981. What has drawn me on the long journey to India so many times over these past 18 years? An incident that occurred during my second trip reveals the reason.

One morning we were working on Ardha Chandrasana (Half Moon Pose) and Mr. Iyengar directed me to come onto the platform and do the pose. He gave several instructions about the pose as I held it, trying desperately not to fall over while he spoke. Suddenly he whacked me on the head with his hand and said, "This fellow's problem is he works always from his head." The blow was much more full of sound than fury, a sound that awoke something in me. He was absolutely right about my working from my head. And this was true of me in much more of my life than just my yoga postures. I realized that I was learning a lot more than details about yoga poses at that moment. For perhaps the first time in my years of practice, I saw that while asanas and pranayama are so beneficial and important in themselves, they are also a vehicle for understanding myself more deeply.

Having observed Mr. Iyengar's teaching over time, I think that he has continued to expand the dimensions of the practice of asana and pranayama. He has elevated these physical disciplines, which bring health to the practitioner and allow one to sit comfortably for meditation, to the level of therapeutic and meditative practices. In recent years, he has increasingly related asana and pranayama to the teachings of the classical texts, particularly the *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali and the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. In so doing, he has guided his students toward the wisdom in those works in a very accessible and palpable way.



Like many of his students, I have tried to incorporate what I have learned from Mr. Iyengar into my own teaching, from the subtleties of the actions of the poses to the inclusion of the fundamental principles of yoga in its broadest sense. And like many of his students, in the beginning I did so primarily through imitation. To teach with authenticity, however, requires that the teaching emanate from the teacher's own experience. As the years have passed, I have found my own voice, my own way of presenting his work, or to be more precise, of presenting the fruits of my practice derived from what I have learned from him. This has come in the same way that everything in yoga comes: through effort, through trial and error—discovering what works and what doesn't through repetition and persistence, reflection, and adjustment.

For me one of the most inspiring things about B.K.S. Iyengar is his determination to find his own way, to discover the eternal truths of yoga for himself firsthand. One of his greatest gifts to me has been his living example of the importance of discovering for oneself what is real and not simply taking someone else's word for it—not even his. Yet for all I have learned from B.K.S. Iyengar over these past 18 years and the changes he has wrought in my practice, my teaching, and my life, what continues to bring me back to India is the deep connection I feel with him when I am in his presence.

Over the years there have been times when I have feared him, when I have admired him, when I have disliked him, emulated him, and been moved to tears of joy by him. I have studied with him, shared meals with him, entertained him as a guest in my home and in my studio, exchanged letters with him, dreamt of him. I experience that connection most profoundly, though, in his classes. At times, it is as if he and I are in a dance together. His instructions and adjustments move my awareness and my body in the same way an experienced dancer moves his partner—confidently, firmly, with subtle gestures and touches. Of course it isn't like that every moment of every class, but when we are working that way, I can feel what he is guiding me toward, and I can feel that he can feel that I can feel it.

Yoga is often defined as union. Between us, in those moments, yoga takes place. The possibilities of that experience have taken me back to India again and again, and my love, respect, and gratitude for the man who continues to open up those possibilities took me back to honor him on his celebration of the passing of a thousand moons.

*John Schumacher is the founder and director of Unity Woods Yoga Center in the Washington, D.C., area.*



# Living Legend

**By Mary Dunn**

My introduction to B.K.S. Iyengar came in 1974 when he made his first trip to the San Francisco Bay Area where I was living. It was my mother, Mary Palmer, who rallied her yoga community in Ann Arbor in the early '70s to sponsor his trip to the United States, so it was natural that I would help show him the Bay Area sights. He enthusiastically welcomed plans for concerts, a movie (*Jonathan Livingston Seagull*), picnics, tours of Golden Gate Park, museums, and more. He practiced early in the morning before the classes, and his energy from dawn until late night eclipsed that of those of us around him.

In my first class with Guruji, I knew that I was in the presence of an extraordinary teacher, one whose grasp of how the human body works was beyond anything I had imagined anyone knowing. I also had the experience of sensing my body warming and cooling ac-

cording to the type of pranayama we practiced. As exciting as those physical experiences were, it was Guruji's interweaving of psychological and philosophical observations into the experience of the postures that made me want to study yoga with him. And so I did, year after year in India and the United States.

"Discover the intelligence of the body," he reminds us. "Yoga is a practical subject." Iyengar's teaching stems from these themes of discovery and discipline, and defines how the relationship of the mind and body can be understood and directed. Far from being physical training alone, the experience of consciousness in postures and breath can bring an understanding of intelligence and the inner spirit of life itself. Then Patanjali's eight aspects of ashtanga yoga become a living subject, as alive now as when they were written and as relevant to life in the West as in the East. Guruji's writing and teaching covers practical and classical philosophy, asana, and pranayama. "Find out!" he encourages. And indeed, my own study of these eight aspects provides me a method of continuing self-discovery.

As a practitioner, Guruji is intense and exhibits great concentration. He continuously challenges his limits to create opportunities for growth. This year I marveled at Guruji in his 80th year practicing fluid, harmonious backbends that he held for long periods of time. Each time I have studied with him, I have learned from the dimensions of his practice—balance, grace, willpower, and inspiration.

As a teacher, Guruji's intensity and self-study create excitement for the teaching/learning process. After his classes one overhears other students saying, "He was teaching this class to me," or "He was watching my every move." And indeed he was. Effective teaching binds each student to what is taught. Guruji inspires us to understand how to refine asanas and pranayama as a key to the workings of the mind. He opens up the possibilities of transformation. It is this understanding and possibility that keep the subject fresh, engaging, and challenging for me as a teacher.

When Guruji says, "Teach what you know," he means that truthfulness and relevance is the responsibility of each teacher. Each teacher has to discover the full impact of every instruction. To evolve we must learn to test and observe the effects of instruction, action, and interaction in our own life experience and in that of others. Yoga is a means to uncover what it means to be human and how to make progress towards wisdom.

*Mary Dunn teaches at the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Institute in New York City and the Greenwich Arts Center in Greenwich, Connecticut.*

# Genius in Action

## By Patricia Walden

Nothing could have prepared me for B.K.S. Iyengar. In my first class with him, he boomed out, "If you keep your armpits open, you won't get depressed," and from the feeling in my rising, opening chest, I knew exactly what he meant. There was fire in his presence, a fire that lit the light of yoga in me and changed my life. He was direct and unequivocating, with a fierceness of spirit that implied he could face any challenge.

That was over 25 years ago. Since then, I have come to see B.K.S. Iyengar as a modern classicist, steeped in tradition, versed in the Vedas, and fluent in Patanjali. At 80, he continues to practice intensely: 35-minute Headstands, 108 drop-overs (cycles of Tadasana, dropping back to Urdhva Dhanurasana, and then rising back to Tadasana), 10-minute Viparita Dandasanas, and long forward bends. As he says, "When I was young, I played. Now I stay."

In the early years, his teaching reflected his practice. We did many, many poses, including advanced ones, in each class. He rained instructions on us with a torrent of intensity. His focus was on action—action that fused body and mind: "Make the mind feel the stretch. Awaken the mind of the little toe." We would leave class exhausted and exhilarated, soaked to the bone by the flood of his teaching, wondering whether we could even make it to our hotel rooms.

As the years have passed, he has added new dimensions to his teaching. We do fewer poses per class, but he takes us deeper into each. Demonstrating the nuances of practice, he encourages and cajoles us to see and to understand. He urges us to explore, to find out where we are dull or overworking, and to adjust, so that consciousness can grace the body evenly throughout. And most of all, he emphasizes that the purpose of practice is to come closer to the soul, through balancing action and reflection. In his own wry words: "There is pose and repose."

With the mind of a scientist and the soul of a poet, he has spent thousands of hours using his body as a laboratory—experimenting, exploring, observing, and creating. I remember once watching him practice before teaching a class. I was startled to see his body twisted in uncharacteristically poor alignment; but later in class I realized that he had been working out the problems of his students within his own body. He once told me that he learned his method by exploring not only

what was right, but what was wrong; and that he hoped his students could learn from his experience.

In therapeutic classes, he is a creative and healing force of nature, a genius in action. For two solid hours, he weaves through the Institute, seeing and responding with lightning speed: a modern healer in love with his work.

It is extraordinary and challenging to have Guruji as a teacher, to learn from him year after year and to experience his genius, generosity, and guidance. His passion for excellence and unrelenting interest in yoga are contagious; and those qualities, along with his courage and willpower, inspire my life, my practice, and my teaching.

When I first started doing yoga, practicing was hard for me. It took tremendous effort. In contrast, Guruji looked effortless and free even while practicing the most difficult poses. Inspired by his example and instruction, I stayed with the struggle. What followed surprised me; through discipline, I fell in love with practice and an inner freedom flowered.

I now bring this lesson to my students: If we stay with our chosen path and develop the discipline to go through difficulty, our efforts will transform us. The greatest gift a teacher/guru can give a student is genuine interest; such genuine interest can transform and shape a student's life beyond measure.

Guruji is my link with tradition. He shows me what is possible with practice and represents to me a living example of chapter I, verse 14 of the *Sutra*: "Yoga is successful when practiced with devotion, uninterrupted, over a long period of time."

I remember one of the first lessons I learned from him: "When confronted with difficulty, take an action, no matter how small." Anything is possible, if you act (and reflect) with love and devotion.

*Patricia Walden is director of the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Center of Greater Boston.*

# Medicine Man

## By Ramanand Patel

Thirty years ago, I stood in a yoga class. "Mr. Iyengar," as we called him then, was to come to teach the class. As we stood in Tadasana each student was introduced to him by our teacher, Helena Thomas. When my turn came he asked me what was wrong with my right shoulder. Did this man read my mind or did he have X-ray vision? Four years earlier the arm had been paralyzed for eight weeks. I tried to relay the details; he cut me short with, "Yes, yes, we will see!"

The class was expected to last three hours; he continued for four. I don't recall having ever worked so



hard for so long. The floor beneath our feet was wet with perspiration. Finally we heard him say, "You can lie down to relax." But before I had a chance to relish the words, he turned to me and said, "Not you!" I saw incredible love, compassion, and confidence in his expressive eyes.

He put me in Sarvangasana (Shoulderstand), adjusted my arms, stood on them, and asked me to turn the right arm out "to the maximum." When I stood up he asked, "How does your arm feel?"

"Feels good," I said, pleasantly surprised.

"Tell me more," he encouraged.

"It feels very good."

"No, tell me more," he insisted.

"It feels better than ever."

"How so?"

"Sir, I am not sure what to say." I gave up.

"The joint feels full; it no longer feels empty." He put the feeling into words for me. Those words changed the course of my life—for good, for the better. Whereas the world's greatest medical authorities had given up trying to understand what was wrong with my shoulder, here was a man who defied all accepted norms and even knew how to describe the feeling his instructions created.



Since that fateful day many eventful years have passed. "Mr. Iyengar" is now known as "Guruji." His students' ranks have grown to some 4 million across the globe. He has been honored by national and international medical, political, private, and public institutions. On the occasion of his 80th birthday celebration last December, many felicitous things were said by many people. He in turn was very gracious and lapped up the attention with almost childlike fascination. In the midst of all this, he voiced a regret that his wish to take yoga to the poor village folk remained unfulfilled. I thought I saw tears in those eyes. It reminded me of a Sanskrit definition of a sage—he has a smile in one eye and a tear in the other.

To me his greatest teaching is "Be ruthlessly and uncompromisingly kind." In being true to the art of yoga, he has a reputation for sending chilling terror down the spine of anyone who attempts to present anything but the best yoga; he has not cared if that gave him an unfavorable reputation. Contrast this with his tender heart, childlike wonderment, and Godlike compassion towards any and all—irrespective of their wealth, class, or status in society.

He very effectively instills fear, inculcates discipline, demands and commands honor and respect, expounds extraordinary knowledge, elucidates esoteric poetry; but more than all these it is his genuine concern and love for the poor and suffering humanity that earns him a place among the sages of India.

*Ramanand Patel trains Iyengar teachers at the San Francisco Iyengar Yoga Institute.*

# One of a Kind



## By Dean Lerner

Some years ago during a class I attended at his institute in Pune, Guruji said, "Why do people look only at my poses? Look at how I have lived my life. Yoga is everything that I do."

From my first contact with Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar to the present, Guruji has been a guiding influence on my path of yoga and life and has had a deep impact on my view and philosophy of life, even my career. Over 19 years ago, I first wrote to him asking many questions about the asanas from his book *Light on Yoga* (Schocken Books, 1995) and stated that many of the postures were uncomfortable. Two weeks later I received a response which I will never forget. It read: "Dear Dean Lerner, I am not concerned with your comfort, but with the precision in which you do the poses." His terse response was like an arrow to my consciousness and gave me a sense of direction for my practice and thinking, and subsequently my teaching.

A few years later I traveled to India for the first time to study with Mr. Iyengar. Of course I knew of his reputation of being a fierce and challenging teacher. I thought, rather naively, that I was well-prepared for that. What I was not prepared for was the genius and compassion behind the fierceness, and the purity and authenticity of his teaching. Like a true teacher, he did not say "Come to me for answers;" rather Guruji would embolden us to read the *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali. He would affirm, "Patanjali explains all of human nature. He states the obstacles on the path of yoga and enlightenment and the means to overcome them. Do not come to me. You must work and find out for yourself. I can guide you, but you must do the work!"

Over the years, Guruji's teachings and practice have clearly evolved and been refined. A few years ago during a class, he said, "When I was younger, I filled time with many asanas. Now my asanas are filled with time." This man of great originality and creativity continues to penetrate deeply into the postures and all the aspects of yoga. He has distilled his teachings into essential core instructions as he so aptly demonstrated during the three-hour classes he taught at his 80th birthday celebration. While the classes were physically intense, the postures were intended to move us from the mundane to the most subtle spiritual essence of our being. The inspired classes were a spiritual experience of living intensely and completely in the moment.

I cannot say that I am an original teacher. In fact, I emulate Mr. Iyengar's teachings and instructions as closely as I can and do my utmost to present the Iyengar method as purely as possible. Of course, my practice and teaching are filtered through my personal experience, therefore my teaching carries its own uniqueness. However, this uniqueness differs from originality. I endeavor to keep my teaching fresh by deepening my own practice, and this makes me appreciate all the more the profundity and originality in Guruji's teaching.

*Dean Lerner is director of the Center for Well-Being in Lemont, Pennsylvania.*

Dangling from a trapeze 25 feet above the ground, Sam Keen comes face-to-face with

# FEAR IN THE BELLY

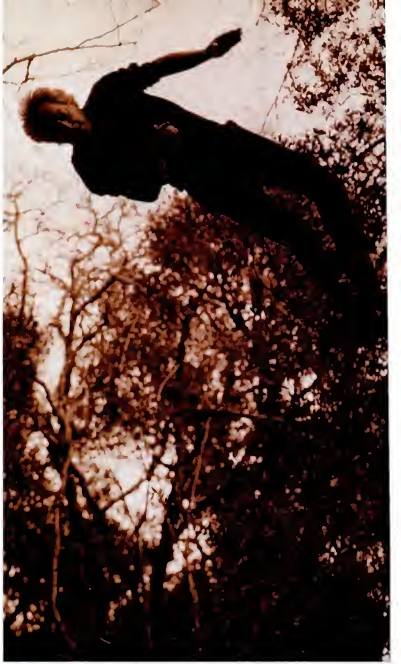
At the age of 62, when most people are considering slowing down, Sam Keen launched into a love affair with the flying trapeze. Keen's newfound passion continues his long career as a philosopher of the embodied life. In his search for truth, Keen has never been content with abstract, intellectual answers. After training as a theologian and philosopher at Harvard Divinity School and Princeton University, in 1968 Keen left a professorship in theology to move to California, where he leaped into the burgeoning human potential movement, investigating the brave new world in which encounter groups, psychedelic drugs, body-centered therapies, and Eastern meditation techniques were fueling an excitingly direct exploration of human consciousness.

In 1969 Keen joined the staff of *Psychology Today,* where for 20 years he served as a kind of in-house philosopher and a critical bellwether for the human potential movement. Through his many articles and interviews, he engaged many of the seminal ideas and influential spiritual and psychological thinkers of our time. Keen has authored 14 books, including the best-selling *Fire in the Belly* (Bantam, 1992), a critique of traditional models of masculinity, and *To Love and Be Loved* (Bantam, 1997), an investigation of the meaning of love in a culture obsessed with romance. Throughout his work, Keen has constantly explored the question of how we can live authentically—how we can become the authors of our own lives, rather than playing the roles assigned to us by culture and family.

In this excerpt from his newest book, *Learning to Fly: Trapeze—Reflections on Fear, Trust, and Letting Go* (Broadway Books, 1999) Keen examines the positive role fear can play in our lives. According to Keen, "If 'security' and 'safety' become watchwords by which [we] live, gradually the circle of [our] experience becomes small and claustrophobic." But Keen argues that if we investigate our fears rather than turning away from them—if we are willing to dance on the razor's edge between excitement and dread—we can keep ourselves vibrant, vital, and fully engaged with our lives.

**By Sam Keen** Photographs by Peter DaSilva





DURING MY FIRST YEAR of practice I was acutely aware of an alternating current of fear and fascination that pulsed through my body each time I approached the trapeze. An hour before each session, as I was driving from my home in Sonoma to the San Francisco School of Circus Arts, I would imagine the tricks I was going to practice and my pulse rate would gradually rise. Once in the gym, I would go to the stone-cold bathroom and put on my tights. No sooner was I dressed than I had to move my bowels. Like any wild animal sensing danger, I automatically prepared for fight or flight.

By the time I had finished my warm-up and climbed to the pedestal, a tide of adrenaline coursed through my system and turned my body into a high-tension electrical wire. My fear was raw and brutal. A thundering herd of terrors stampeded through the canyons and plains of my body. My heart beat wildly; my chest constricted and my breath came in rapid, shallow bursts; my eyes flitted in every direction trying to identify the source of the threat; my legs shook. The hoof beats came closer and began to trample my mind and destroy my reason. The voices in my head said, "I am afraid of high places. Afraid of falling. Afraid of getting hurt." I looked into the void, vertigo assaulted me, and an urgent voice warned me, "Get out of here, get back onto solid ground before something terrible happens."

But at the last minute, always the last minute, something in me refused to flee before the onslaught, refused to yield to the blackmail of catastrophic expectations. I repeated as a liturgy the advice of the Persian poet Rumi, "Do not go the way fear bids you to go" and I stood my ground, turned around, and looked at my fear with cool eyes.

After one session in which I had repeatedly attempted a new trick and had vibrated all evening as if I had drunk too much espresso, I returned home, took a hot bath, drank a brandy to help me come down from my elevated state of excitement, and tried to think calmly about my experience of the last months.

THE PRACTICE OF THE TRAPEZE has acquainted me with many unholy ghosts that hide in the dark regions of the psyche.

There is nothing mysterious about the simple survival fears that warn us against the dangers of frolicking around high places. There are only three fears that are instinctual for human beings: the fear of falling, the fear of being imprisoned in a tight space, and the fear of loud noises. So it is pure biological wisdom that warns me that soaring on a trapeze is apt to result in pain, injury, or death, and that I should be especially careful since I am no longer young and nimble.

There is also a deeper level of psychological fear that is connected with self-image and is rooted in unconscious feelings of shame and guilt. Both in myself and in others I have noticed that once the fear of literal dangers has been mastered, a more complex fear of symbolic dangers emerges. I am afraid of failure. I am afraid of what others will think of me. I am afraid I will embarrass myself. I am afraid I will lose control. I am afraid I can't trust you. I am afraid I will be abandoned if I do not measure up to your expectations.

Beneath all of these, there is a primal fear, what the existentialists called ontological anxiety—the fear of extinction, of the void, of nothingness, of death—that is



# The practice of trapeze provides me with a daily occasion to become a connoisseur of my fears.

an abiding climate in the bottom of the psyche.

Fear is a complex phenomenon that creates illusion and unhappiness insofar as we allow it to remain unconscious. If we fail to separate, classify, decipher, and demystify our various fears, they appear in disguised forms.

For instance, when I was younger and more macho, I habitually denied my fears and hid them under the guise of braggadocio and false courage: "The difficult I do immediately, the impossible takes a little longer." These days, when age has fatigued and mellowed me, fear is much more apt to appear as a passive-aggressive whiner who makes excuses: "I'm sleepy; I'm too tired; I feel a little bit sick today."

The practice of trapeze provides me with a daily occasion to distinguish between rational and irrational fears, to become a connoisseur of my fears. Each day I interrogate my various fears, listen and talk back, and force them to come out of hiding and reveal their true names. When I neither banish nor run away from them, an area of freedom opens up within which I discover new options. I cease to be the victim and act to break the hypnotic cycle of dread, the vicious feedback loop, the self-fulfilling prophecy of failure that shrinks my world.

THE OTHER DAY ALL OF THE DISGUISES fell away long enough for me to see the unadorned face of my deepest fear.

I was experimenting with getting into a position on the trapeze from which I could drop face first into the net. I swung off the pedestal, flipped into a knee-hang and swung back and forth several times, but was not comfortable in letting go. As I flipped back into a full hang, I felt dizzy from a too-rapid transition from head-down to head-up, and....

The next thing I knew I was awash in a tingling sea of warmth with no awareness of who or where I was or what had happened to me. I saw a shadow passing back and forth in front of my eyes. As my vision cleared I saw that it was the trapeze swinging over my head. I had fainted, fallen, and was lying on my back in the net. My first thought was "This is what death is like, suddenly you just aren't there anymore." Then I realized that, this time at least, I had been resurrected immediately.

The mini-death left me shaken. I wasn't overly concerned with the actual fainting because it was due to a simple mistake I would not repeat, of going too rapidly from upside down to right side up. But the momentary oblivion, the total self-loss, the encounter with nothingness threw me into a state of vague anxiety.

That evening when I lay in bed all of the stories of flyers who have broken arms, legs, necks, who have been killed by falling wrong in the net, ran through my mind time and time again, constricted my heart, and made me timid. I wanted to cower under the covers where it was safe. A voice that pretended to be the voice of wisdom warned me to avoid all unforeseen dangers.

What, I wondered, is this black hole into which every thing disappears, all courage, all resolve, all rationality? It is unlike my ordinary fear which I can negotiate with and sometimes conquer. This one is older than my psyche and larger than my ego. In an effort to learn the name of the monster, I curled into the fetal position and allowed myself to sink into the feeling of pure panic. Gradually a voice, almost a whisper, emerged from the black hole. "I am small, alone, sad, and helpless. Death is lurking. My only hope is to curl up, be very still, and wait. I am abandoned. Please rescue me."

Holding the deadly fear in my hand (like a surgeon holding a diseased heart), I discovered that it has al-

ways been with me since the earliest days of my childhood. It lurks like a virus just beneath the surface of my awareness. It is a driving force. It causes me to approach my life as if I had to escape from some danger each day; it puts a slight pall of dread over everything. If I could take a slice through all of the levels of my consciousness at any moment and put it under the microscope, I would find that anxiety about existence is like a dye that suffuses and colors all experience. Anxiety—low grade fear—is a primal motive force. In the degree that I remain unconscious of its presence, it drives me to strive for impossible fulfillment, makes me dissatisfied with any achieved goal, impels me to prove myself before a spectral audience, to work and be virtuous in order to earn the approval of an absent God. It destroys my contentment and steals away my simple pleasures.

Now I understand the folly of trying to defeat this demon! Like squaring the circle, it is not to be done. My temptation to panic is rooted in a primal sense of abandonment, in my final helplessness in the face of the vastness of the cosmos and the threat that in death I will be swallowed up into nothingness.

How do I deal with this meta-fear—death, nothingness, the void? The question is philosophical or religious, not psychological. I do not have any firm religious belief in immortality, resurrection, or reincarnation, although I do have a kind of agnostic trust in the nameless One that birthed me into being. How do I acquire what my old professor at Harvard, theologian Paul Tillich, called "the courage to be" that allows me to exist creatively with my fear? More than this, how can I be joyful when my final fall is to the grave?

This much is clear to me. I do not believe that I can ever conquer fear. I suspect those forms of spiritual heroism that claim to banish it. St. Paul advised us that love casts out all fear, but then Paul had neither wife nor children nor friends that were exceptionally close and irreplaceable. If one breaks all intimate attachments to other persons, by definition, one does not fear losing other persons. But in the measure that I love and hold dear my father, my mother, my children, my wife, and my friends, I fear their possible loss and grieve their actual loss. Nor do I accept the Eastern doctrine of detachment. Eugen Herrigel's classic book, *Zen in the Art of Archery*, which is based on the notion that the warrior is the ideal human type, explains that the sword master "no longer knows what the fear of life and terror of death are. He lives...happily enough in the world but ready at any time to quit it without being in the least disturbed by the thought of death....He is no longer capable of experiencing what fear feels like." Perhaps I am not spiritually advanced enough to have given up attachments and acquired the virtue of fearlessness.

THERE IS A SMALL DIALOGUE that takes place between a flying master and his new students that is one of the standard litanies of the tribe: "Are you afraid?" the master asks, "Yes I am" the student replies. "Good," the master responds. "I would be worried about you if you were not."

Even professional flyers retain a lively respect for the realistic dangers of their trade and a measure of appropriate fear. Isabel Caballero, a flyer with the Flying Caballeros and one of the handful of women currently performing the triple somersault, told me "Even after all these years I am afraid all the time. Every time I climb up on the pedestal I look down and I think about how high up it is. But I love flying more than I fear it." Professional aerialists' subtle relationship to fear echoes






# We learn to fly not by becoming fearless, but by the daily practice of courage.

the sentiment expressed by the legendary Alfredo Cadona: "We fear falling. But we do not fear that we will fall."

The real question is not "Are you afraid?" but "Of what are you fearful and what do you do with fear?" Some people are afraid of embarrassing themselves by their clumsiness and refuse to try to fly. Some are afraid of climbing the ladder. Some are afraid of falling from high places only when they get to the pedestal and look down. One woman with whom I sometimes practice is so afraid of failure that she curses herself violently whenever she doesn't do a trick "perfectly." Two of my flying companions, David and Kat, who are both more daring than I in trying new tricks, are afraid they are not strong enough to hold on and might slip off the bar. I have the grip of a bulldog and I have no fear of a failure of strength, but I am afraid of the net. I am not flexible and don't trust myself to turn in midair and land in a safe position.

And, all of us are afraid of pain and injury.

When I was first trying to learn the basic swing and force-out, I developed a chronic cycle of fear due to my repeated failure. The swing looks simple enough but is, in fact, very difficult. To build a good swing, the flyer must throw his body backwards and forwards in a pendular motion in a rhythm that complements and extends the natural arc of the trapeze. If the timing of any of his kicks is not right it will kill the swing and/or cause him to approach the board on the back swing at the wrong angle and whack his legs. For two or three months the moves eluded me. I didn't have the necessary strength, flexibility, or timing. Consequently, almost every time I attempted a vigorous swing I hit my legs or buttocks on the pedestal board on the return swing. Two or three times each session a dull thud would resound through the area—the sound of one cheek clapping, or a leg or two meeting solid wood. Within the hour a delicate blue bruise line would appear somewhere on my rear anatomy.

Not surprisingly, I began to develop a minor phobia—a fear of crashing. Climbing to the platform, I would visualize each movement, pump up my willpower, and launch myself into the pendulum. But a vicious feedback loop contaminated my consciousness. The cellular memory of pain tightened my muscles and

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# The Psoas is:

a) A remote tribe in Papua, New Guinea.

b) A revolutionary computer operating system.

✔ c) The muscle that is the key to your structural stability.

If you guessed C, you're correct. Buried deep within the core of your body, the psoas (pronounced "so-az") affects every facet of your life, from your physical well-being to who you feel yourself to be and how you relate to the world. A bridge linking the trunk to the legs, the psoas is critical for balanced alignment, proper joint rotation, and full muscular range of motion. In yoga, the psoas plays an important role in every asana. In backbends, a released psoas allows the front of the thighs to lengthen and the leg to move independently from the pelvis. In standing poses and forward bends, the thighs can't fully rotate outward unless the psoas releases. All yoga poses are enhanced by a released rather than shortened psoas. (When you reverse your orientation to gravity in inversions, however, the psoas must be toned as well as released to maintain proper spinal stability.)

Whether you suffer from a sore back or anxiety, from knee strain or exhaustion, there's a good chance that a constricted psoas muscle might be contributing to your woes. Getting in touch with this deeply buried muscle can be humbling at first. You may discover that you've been do-

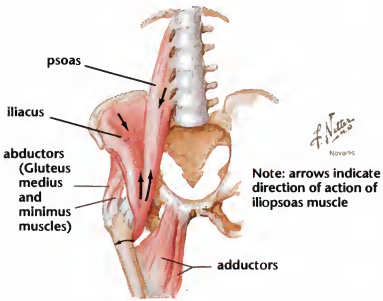


**By Liz Koch | Photographs by Rosa Lau**



Cofounder of The Yoga Garden, a studio in San Anselmo, California, model Amy Cooper has taught yoga for 20 years, and helped Koch develop her insights on the psoas in yoga. Beginning from roots in Iyengar yoga, Cooper has drawn on many sources to develop a teaching style that encourages students to find the yoga practices that best enhance their lives.

ing many poses by contracting your core, instead of relying on your skeleton for support and allowing your more peripheral muscles to organize around a toned but flowing and spacious center. But if you persevere, psoas work can add new insight, openness, and stability to your practice. Though your psoas may not be as easy to sense as your biceps or hamstrings, improving your awareness of this crucial muscle can greatly enhance your physical and emotional health.




Along with improving your structural stability, developing awareness of your psoas can bring to light fears long locked in the body as unconscious physical tension. Intimately involved in the fight or flight response, the psoas can curl you into a protective fetal ball or flex you to prepare the powerful back and leg muscles to spring into action. Because the psoas is so intimately involved in such basic physical and emotional reactions, a chronically tightened psoas continually signals your body that you're in danger, eventually exhausting the adrenal glands and depleting the immune system. As you learn to approach the world without this chronic tension, psoas awareness can open the door to a more sensitive attunement to your body's inner signals about safety and danger, and to a greater sense of inner peace.

## Meet Your Psoas

To locate this powerful muscle, imagine peeling your body like an onion. The first layer is the skin; next come the abdominal muscles in front and the massive muscles of the sides and back. One layer deeper lie the intestines and another layer of back muscles. Continue peeling each layer until just before you reach your skeletal core: There in the center of your inner universe rest the psoas muscles. One on each side of the spine, each working independently yet harmoniously, the psoas attaches to the side and toward the front of the 12th thoracic vertebra and each of the lumbar vertebra. Moving through the pelvis without attaching to bone, the psoas inserts along with the iliacus muscle in a common tendon at the top of the femur.

A healthily functioning psoas provides a sensitive suspension bridge between the trunk and the legs. Ideally, the psoas guides the transfer of weight from the trunk into the legs and also acts as a grounding wire guiding the flow of subtle energies. Working properly, the psoas functions like the rigging of a circus tent, stabilizing your spine just as guy wires help stabilize the main pole of the big top.

In addition, the psoas provides a diagonal support through the trunk, forming a shelf for the vital organs of the abdominal core. In walking, a healthy psoas moves freely and joins with a released diaphragm to continuously massage the spine as well as the organs, blood vessels, and nerves of the trunk. Working as a hydraulic pump, a freely moving psoas stimulates the flow of fluids throughout the body. And a released, flowing psoas, combined with a stable, weight-bearing pelvis, contributes to the sensations of feeling *grounded* and *centered.*

## Psoas/Pelvis Relationship

Think of your pelvis as the foundation of a balanced skeletal structure. For your pelvis to provide this stable base, it must function as part of the trunk rather than as part of the legs. Many people mistakenly think of their legs as starting at the waist, perhaps because so many major leg muscles attach to the pelvis. But skeletally and structurally, your legs start at your hip sockets. If your pelvis tilts forward or back or side to side every time you move your legs, the bones can't bear and transfer weight properly. Your psoas will then be called upon to help protect the spine by stabilizing your skeleton. Since the psoas can contract and release independently at any of its joint attachments, it can compensate for structural imbalances in many ways. But if you constantly contract the psoas to correct for skeletal instability, the muscle eventually begins to shorten and lose flexibility.

Shortening the psoas leads to a host of unfortunate conditions. Inevitably, other muscle groups become involved in compensating for the loss of structural integrity. The pelvic bowl tips forward, shrinking the

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# Release Your Psoas

The internal awareness that develops through yoga is the most important tool for learning to release the psoas. And releasing the psoas will bring new freedom, ease, and structural integrity to your yoga practice.

It can be difficult at first to access the subtle sensations of the psoas. Buried in the body, engaged in habitual patterns of holding (especially when you're sitting or standing), and deeply linked to your emotions, the psoas is best approached with quiet attention, patience, and perseverance. Awareness is the first key. Like a flashlight that illuminates the contents of a dark closet, you can use your attention to clarify and define each sensation in your core.

## Constructive Rest Position

Rather than trying to instantly correct all the imbalances and habitual compensations you've developed throughout your life, we'll begin by simply releasing the psoas in a posture called constructive rest position. In this pose, you don't need to perform any muscular action to release the psoas. Gravity will do the work.

To take constructive rest position, lie on your back, bend your knees to about 90 degrees, and place your feet on the floor in line with your hip sockets, 12 to 16 inches from your buttocks *(Figure 1)*. Be careful not to flatten or exaggerate the curves in either your lumbar (lower back) or cervical (neck) spine. Rest your hands and forearms on your rib cage, on your pelvis, or by bringing them to the floor as in Savasana.

Now that you're in position, shift your awareness to the support of your bones. Begin by sensing the weight of your bones sinking down toward the floor. Take note of any part of your skeleton that feels as though it is suspended, any place where the muscular contraction prevents the bones from surrendering to the pull of gravity. As your psoas continues to release, the distribution of weight will start to feel increasingly even throughout your body.

## Active Supine Stretch

Once you've begun to understand the skeletal position and internal sensations that accompany releasing the psoas, you can move on to more actively lengthening the muscle. Starting from constructive rest position and keeping both knees bent, bring your right upper thigh toward your chest. Gently hug your right leg toward your trunk.

Be very careful not to curl your pelvis up off the floor as you move your right leg; the pelvis should remain aligned with the trunk. Sensing into your flexed right hip and softening in the hip socket will help free the right thighbone.

You're now ready to stretch your left



**1 CONSTRUCTIVE REST POSITION. In this pose, gravity naturally releases your psoas. Your only task is to allow your bones to sink toward the floor, noting and relaxing all unnecessary muscular contraction.**



**2 ACTIVE SUPINE STRETCH.** **To stretch your left psoas, begin in the constructive rest position, hug your right thigh toward your chest, and slowly straighten your left leg along the ground. Be careful to keep the pelvis aligned with your trunk; if the bottom of the pelvis starts to curl up toward the ceiling, don't straighten your left leg completely.**

psoas. Very slowly walk the left foot farther away from the hips *(Figure 2)*. As the leg extends, keep your awareness on the front of the left hip socket, releasing any psoas tension you notice there. Once you begin to sense the psoas lengthening, follow the sensation all the way up the muscle to its attachment at the 12th thoracic vertebra, located behind the center of your solar plexus.

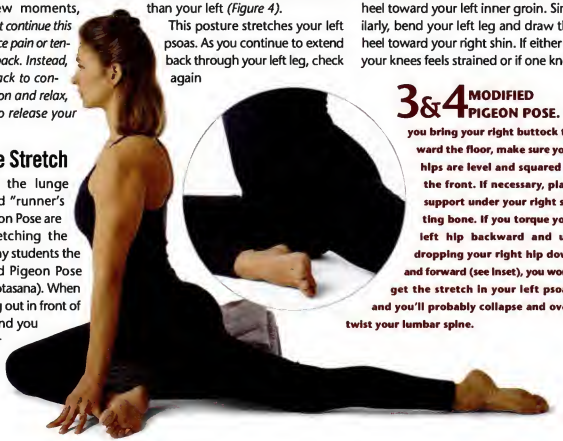
To amplify the stretch, push your right leg against your right arm as though you were gently kicking up toward the sky. At the same time, resist the push of the leg with your clasped arms. After a few moments, change sides. *Don't continue this pose if you experience pain or tension in your lower back. Instead, immediately go back to constructive rest position and relax, allowing gravity to release your psoas again.*

## The Ultimate Stretch

All variations of the lunge (sometimes called "runner's stretch") and Pigeon Pose are excellent for stretching the psoas, but for many students the best is a modified Pigeon Pose (Eka Pada Rajakapotasana). When you stretch one leg out in front of you and one behind you while keeping your pelvis stable, you isolate the stretch in the psoas and iliacus muscles attached to the back leg.

To come into this pose, start by kneeling on all fours. Swing your right knee forward onto the floor between your hands, releasing and rotating the right femur within the right hip socket, and bring your right buttock toward the floor. At the same time, extend your left leg straight back behind you. Make sure you keep your hips level and squared to the front *(Figure 3)*. If necessary, place a firm bolster or pile of blankets under your right sitting bone to keep your pelvis level and supported. Don't bring your right buttock to the floor by torquing your right hip farther forward or farther toward the floor than your left *(Figure 4)*.

This posture stretches your left psoas. As you continue to extend back through your left leg, check again that you are keeping your pelvis facing squarely forward. If the pelvis torques, you'll lose the psoas stretch, and you may also compress or overtwist the lower back. If you're stretching properly, you shouldn't feel tension in your lower back. The release and stretch should begin where your psoas crosses your hip at the front of the joint, and you should feel an upward extension through both the front and back of your trunk. The line of your body should form a continuous arc, with no abrupt angles.



**3&4 MODIFIED PIGEON POSE.** **As you bring your right buttock toward the floor, make sure your hips are level and squared to the front. If necessary, place support under your right sitting bone. If you torque your left hip backward and up, dropping your right hip down and forward (see inset), you won't get the stretch in your left psoas, and you'll probably collapse and overtwist your lumbar spine.**

## Seated Poses

Now that you've discovered how it feels to release and lengthen your psoas, we'll use a simple cross-legged posture to illuminate the proper use of the psoas in seated asanas.

Sit on a firm, folded blanket, with your feet and lower legs off the blanket. Bend your right leg and draw the heel toward your left inner groin. Similarly, bend your left leg and draw the heel toward your right shin. If either of your knees feels strained or if one knee

is higher than the other, support that knee by placing a rolled towel or blanket or bolster under the knee or thigh.

Begin to notice where the weight of your torso grounds through your pelvis into the floor. Does most of your weight fall behind your sitting bones, or in front of them? If you sense your weight grounding directly through the bones, refine your questioning. Is your weight more on the front of the bones or the back? Lift your sitting bones off the blanket and pull back on the muscles of the buttocks, so that when you lower down again you shift more firmly onto the front of your sitting bones. See if this action provides a more effortless base of support for your spine, rib cage, and head.

To align your pelvis properly, you may have to raise your sitting bones by placing flat, firmly folded towels or blankets under your buttocks. When you get all your props placed correctly, you'll be on the front of your sitting bones, with your knees lower than your hip sockets *(Figure 5)*. This relationship between knees and hips is critical in all seated postures because it allows your psoas to open at the front of the hip; in turn, this opening allows a release of tension throughout your legs and lower back. As the weight of the body releases down through the bones, it grounds into the earth, and a subtle sensation of support rebounds upward.

When your pelvis is stable and your skeletal structure is free to align properly, sitting feels effortless. You shouldn't have to use muscular tension to hold yourself up—thrusting your chest forward or pulling your shoulders back to lengthen your trunk. If you feel as though your spine collapses without these actions, if your weight is still placed behind your sitting bones, or if your knees are still higher than your hip sockets *(Figure 6)*, continue to add towels or blankets until you find the sensation of support that accompanies proper alignment.

If you still don't feel this support even though you're aligned properly, try shifting your weight slightly forward through your hip sockets until you feel a release at the core of your body. At first, this release may feel a little unsettling. You may even experience a subtle fear of falling. As the psoas lets go, you are shifting from a familiar feeling of controlling your posture with muscles to an unfamiliar feeling of relying on your skeleton for support. Since it's new, the sensation may feel a bit scary—or you may feel relief as you let go of unnecessary muscular contraction.

## Standing Release

Maintaining a released psoas can be challenging in standing postures. Biomechanically, standing on two legs is a very complex task, and many of us have developed habitual—but less than optimal—patterns of muscular contraction to help keep us upright. Fortunately, there's an excellent exercise that allows you to discover what it feels like to relax your psoas while standing. Take a block or thick book and place it 12 to 16 inches away from a wall. Stand on the block or book with your left foot, supporting and balancing yourself with your right hand on the wall. Let your right leg and foot hang completely released *(Figure 7)*. Gently swing this leg back and forth like a pendulum, taking care not to let the trunk bend or twist as your leg swings. (If your pelvis is torquing, you're going beyond the released range of motion of your psoas.) See if you can sense the pendulum movement deep within your torso; it should begin at the very top of your psoas at your 12th thoracic vertebra, behind your solar plexus.

After you swing the leg for a few minutes, step down from the block and see if your two legs feel different. You've released the psoas attached to the swinging leg, and most likely this





**5&6 SIMPLE CROSS-LEGGED POSE.** **In seated postures, your knees should be lower than your hip sockets, with your weight balanced on the front of your sitting bones. If your knees are too high and your weight falls behind your sitting bones, you'll have to work hard with your muscles to stay upright, rather than releasing and relying on the support of your skeleton.**

leg will feel longer, freer, and more relaxed.

Now reverse your position and swing the other leg. This time focus not only on the leg you're swinging, but also on the standing leg. Check to make sure you're not leaning into the standing leg hip. Try to sense your weight passing directly down through your leg and foot and into the block. Even though this leg is now bearing weight, you can release the psoas by bringing your awareness to the front of the hip socket and softening any tension you notice there.



**7 STANDING PSOAS RELEASE.** **To learn how it feels to release your psoas while standing, place your left foot on a block or book 12 to 16 inches away from a wall. Support yourself with your right hand against the wall. Completely release your right leg and foot, allowing the leg to swing back and forth like a pendulum that begins deep in your torso behind your solar plexus. Don't let your leg swing so far that your trunk bends or twists; both movements are signs that you're moving beyond the point where your psoas can remain released.**

## Tadasana (Mountain Pose)

Now let's investigate Tadasana (Mountain Pose). Stand with your feet directly underneath your hip sockets, and conduct an inquiry of your sensations. Does your pelvis feel like a stable foundation? Is the rim of your pelvis parallel to the floor? You can check by looking in a mirror, or by placing your hands on top of your hips and following the pelvic rim around to the front of your body, checking to see if both hands are level. Do both your legs transfer weight equally? Are you grounding equally through both feet? If your answer to these questions is "Yes," your psoas should feel released, and you should be able to sense gravity drawing your weight down through your bones. If your bones are aligned, you'll feel a slight sensation of rebounding from the earth, just as a ball dropped to the floor bounces up again. This rebounding force creates a current of energy that aligns the body, flowing up through your spine and out the top of your skull. If your pelvis doesn't feel stable and even, try returning to constructive rest position and the supine psoas stretch. After a few minutes of releasing the psoas and stabilizing the pelvis, return to Tadasana and see if you feel more balanced.

## Vrksasana (Tree Pose)

Once your weight feels equal on both feet in Tadasana, focus on sensing your ankles. Shift your weight ever so slightly forward and back over your ankle joints until you find the place where they feel most released. At that point, your psoas is also most free to release and to assume its proper function as a guy wire for the spine. Moving with proper alignment from Tadasana into Tree Pose requires that you continue to sense this connection between your standing leg and your spine, even as you shift all your weight onto one leg and lift the other into the air.

When you're ready, gradually shift from grounding your weight through both legs to bringing it all onto your right leg. A common mistake in this asana is leaning into the right hip *(Figure 8)*, which can strain the hip ligaments on that side. Instead, balance your weight directly over the bones of your leg, allowing the hip socket to remain released and the right-side psoas to relax.

When you can ground your



**8 TREE POSE (IMPROPERLY LEANING INTO RIGHT HIP).** **Balancing by leaning into the hip is a common mistake in this asana. To avoid this problem, practice balancing your weight directly over the bones of your right leg before you rotate your left leg and lift the left foot to the right inner thigh. Allow the right hip socket to soften and the psoas to release.**

weight straight down through your right leg, without leaning into your right hip or locking your right knee, you can start to turn and lift your left leg. Begin by softening any tension at the front of the left hip socket, releasing the left psoas. Then rotate the thigh bone in the left hip socket, contracting the external rotator muscles located behind the hip. Once you've rotated the femur, lift your left leg, placing the sole of the foot as high as possible on the inner right leg *(Figure 9)*. Again, make sure you didn't lean into your right hip as you lifted the left leg. If necessary, place your hand on a wall or chair to help you maintain balance.

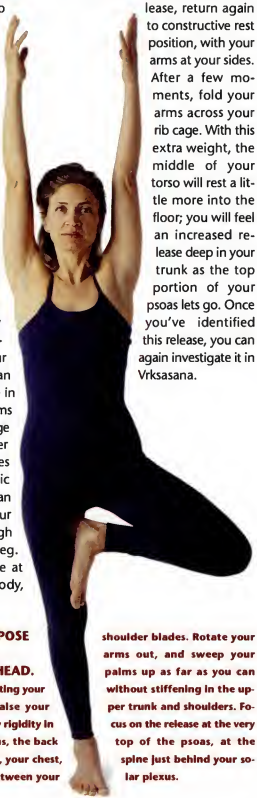
## Psoas and the Arms

If you feel stable and aligned standing in Vrksasana, you can add your arms to the pose. Just as your legs should be able to move independently of your pelvis, your arms should be able to move independently of your shoulders. And, as with your legs, this independent motion can only occur if your psoas is released. To avoid contracting your psoas as you raise your arms, bring your attention to your solar plexus and the back of your rib cage. Melt any rigidity you feel in these areas. Aim to soften and widen equally across the front of your chest and across your back, especially in the area between your shoulder blades. If these regions already feel open, straighten your arms, rotate them outward, and sweep your palms up above your head *(Figure 10)*. If you detect any stiffening in the area of your upper psoas, pause and take your arms a little lower until you can soften the tension you sense in this area. Bringing your arms over your head can challenge the release of the upper psoas where it attaches to the 12th thoracic vertebra, and it can also challenge your stability through your standing leg. To maintain ease at the core of your body, focus on sensing a downward release from the very top of your psoas. Feel your weight dropping down through your bones, even as your arms float up over your head.

If you have difficulty sensing this release, return again to constructive rest position, with your arms at your sides. After a few moments, fold your arms across your rib cage. With this extra weight, the middle of your torso will rest a little more into the floor; you will feel an increased release deep in your trunk as the top portion of your psoas lets go. Once you've identified this release, you can again investigate it in Vrksasana.



**9 TREE POSE.** Ground your weight straight down through your right leg. Soften the front of the left hip socket to release the left psoas, rotate the leg outward, and bring the sole of the left foot as high up on the inner right leg as you can without leaning into the right hip or bending in the torso. If necessary, place your hand on a chair or wall for balance.



**10 TREE POSE WITH ARMS OVERHEAD.** To avoid contracting your psoas as you raise your arms, soften any rigidity in your solar plexus, the back of your rib cage, your chest, and the area between your shoulder blades. Rotate your arms out, and sweep your palms up as far as you can without stiffening in the upper trunk and shoulders. Focus on the release at the very top of the psoas, at the spine just behind your solar plexus.

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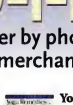
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# Yoga Journal's Guide to Soulful Summer Reading

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Independent Booksellers: An Endangered Species

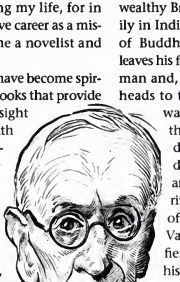
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# 10 Classics of Spiritu

By Gerald Rosen

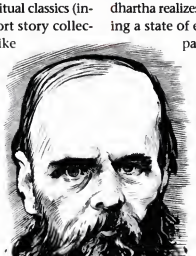
Growing up in the 1950s, I felt lost amid the materialism and shallow sunniness of the postwar culture; I longed for some overarching meaning. Then I came across books by two novelists, Jack Kerouac and J.D. Salinger, that opened my eyes to an entirely new way of looking at the world. I had not known that books could do this. These novels made life seem a much more mysterious and rich experience than I had imagined. At heart, they were books about spiritual journeys, and they made spirituality seem hip and wonderful. They also introduced me to the Buddhist concept of "right livelihood," thereby ultimately changing my life, for in time I gave up a lucrative career as a missile engineer to become a novelist and teacher of literature.

Today, these novels have become spiritual classics, timeless books that provide special wisdom and insight for readers grappling with life's thorniest philosophical dilemmas. The novel as an art form originally came into being as bourgeois entertainment concerned with everyday matters, such as money, success, and ambition. Paradoxically, its very concreteness, which requires the novelist to create plausible characters operating in a credible world, makes the novel an ideal vehicle for exploring spiritual themes and presenting unorthodox worldviews. The best-selling novelists of our time seem not to understand this; but over the past century or so, the form's masters have put this opportunity to especially good use. Their handiwork includes, among others, the following 10 spiritual classics (including a novella, a short story collection, and one novel-like sacred scripture). I cherish these volumes as old friends and teachers; your summer reading experience will be greatly enhanced by packing one or more of these treasures in your travel bag.



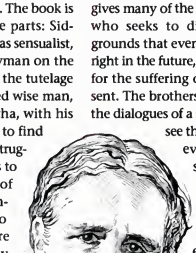
Herman Hesse

**Siddhartha** *by Herman Hesse.* This beautiful little jewel of a novel relates the life story of a man born into a wealthy Brahmin family in India in the time of Buddha. Siddhartha leaves his family as a young man and, along with his pal Govinda, heads to the forest to join a group of wandering ascetics in search of the meaning of life. The book is divided into three parts: Siddhartha as ascetic, as sensualist, and finally as ferryman on the river. There, under the tutelage of an old, unlettered wise man, Vasudeva, Siddhartha, with his fierce honesty, tries to find his salvation. Hesse struggles to find the words to convey experiences of bliss and transcendence which go beyond where language can travel. At one point, Siddhartha meets Buddha himself and, in a beautiful scene, tells Buddha that although he knows Buddha has found the answer, Siddhartha must seek it on his own—just as Buddha did. In the extremely moving conclusion, Siddhartha realizes his original aim by reaching a state of enlightenment and compassion for all.



Fyodor Dostoevsky

**The Brothers Karamazov** *by Fyodor Dostoevsky.* Some think this Everest of a novel the greatest ever written. On the surface, it tells a tale of family feuding and parricide, but underneath, it is really a philosophical quest for a spiritual future for humanity and for Russia. Dostoevsky has divided himself into three characters: Dmitry, the passionate and sensual man; Ivan, the brilliant but skeptical intellectual; and Alyosha, the youngest brother, a follower of a Russian holy man. Dostoevsky knows that a novel is only as strong as its villain, so he gives many of the strongest lines to Ivan, who seeks to discredit God on the grounds that even if things work out all right in the future, he cannot forgive God for the suffering of children in the present. The brothers' arguments are really the dialogues of a soul with itself; we can see that the author is risking everything and is not sure where this will all lead. Dostoevsky is arguing with the most powerful of his own doubts, so we find it incredibly moving when, at the end, this author drawn to darkness and violence turns his back on European materialism and cynicism and passionately



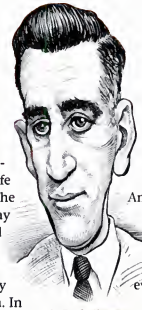
Doris Lessing

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# al Literature

embraces a spiritual view of life.

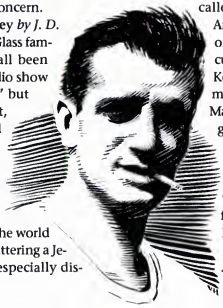
**The Four-Gated City** *by Doris Lessing.* This is the last in the five-volume series of autobiographical novels called "The Children of Violence," which trace the life story of Martha Quest. The first four books portray Martha's youth and young womanhood among the English settlers in colonial, racially divided British Rhodesia. In this book, Martha leaves Africa and is living in postwar London, a bombed-out city where the walls of buildings are not the only boundaries that have come down. The line between good and evil was much clearer under the African sun; here Martha enters a world where such distinctions are lost at a dizzying pace. Her friend Lynda undergoes a personal breakdown, prefiguring Martha's own dissolution. Lessing's genius is to see that this time of social fragmentation and personal disorder can be welcomed as the prelude to a spiritual rebirth. This book moves from politics toward spirituality and reflects Lessing's honesty and concern.



J. D. Salinger

**Franny and Zooey** *by J. D. Salinger.* The seven Glass family children have all been prodigies on the radio show "It's a Wise Child," but now the youngest, Franny, has returned from college to the family apartment in Manhattan and taken to her bed in a kind of nervous breakdown, sick of the world and unceasingly muttering a Jesus prayer. This is especially disconcerting because Franny and her next oldest brother, Zooey, are not only versed in all of the learning of the West, but have also been introduced to Eastern wisdom by their two oldest brothers, Seymour and Buddy. Salinger brings numerous key insights from Eastern wisdom into the heart of the American novel, and takes us on a spiritual journey in which the worth of all learning is called into question. Like Dostoevsky, Salinger risks everything. We discover with Franny that the answer she was looking for was right under her nose, and therefore close to her heart.

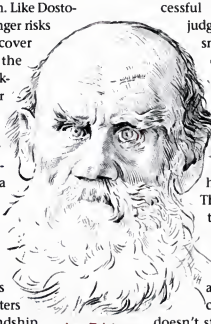
**The Dharma Bums** *by Jack Kerouac.* All of Kerouac's work constitutes a dialogue between his Buddhist and Hindu learning and the residues of his Catholic upbringing. This autobiographical novel, his most joyous and optimistic work, centers on his meeting and friendship with Gary Snyder (here called "Japhy Ryder"), the American poet and student of Chinese and Japanese culture and Zen Buddhism. Kerouac, the child of immigrants and raised in a Massachusetts mill town, is guided by Gary Snyder, Oregon mountain man and anthropologist, in treks up mountains toward "heaven," and in his first steps toward an ecological view and a path of personal independence.



Jack Kerouac

Kerouac, in turn, becomes our guide to the spiritual possibilities inherent in the grandeur and beauty of the great American Northwest. As Kerouac and Snyder trade Buddhist one-liners and bring Eastern thought into contact with native American influences like Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, and John Muir, we realize we are witnessing a rebirth of American transcendentalism. The book is filled with a youthful energy and idealism that makes you wish you were there with them during a time when anything seemed possible for young Americans and for the American novel.

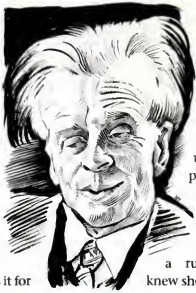
**The Death of Ivan Ilyich** *by Leo Tolstoy.* This powerful novella is a classic of both existentialist and spiritual literature. One day Ivan Ilyich (the Russian name for "John Doe"), a moderately successful lawyer and minor judge, learns that due to a small injury, he is quickly dying. He has never thought about this possibility, and it tears away all the structure of his life and the values and assumptions which have supported him. This is why the existentialists revere this novel: It shows man stripped of all certainties, helpless and alone in a world he can't know. But Tolstoy doesn't stop there. He knows that this forlorn state is exactly the precondition for seeing deeply, and he shows how Ivan Ilyich, through the devotion and faith of his peasant servant, finds his way to a renewed faith in his fellow people, and to a vision in which death is superseded by spiritual awakening. Because Tolstoy has presented the shock of Ivan's sudden despair so vividly, we find Ivan's victory over his despair all the more heartfelt and moving.



Leo Tolstoy

**Island** *by Aldous Huxley.* In this, his last novel, Huxley uses a lifetime of thinking about human possibilities to create an island utopia that illustrates his hopes for the future of humankind. The Indian Ocean island of Pala is a kind of paradise,

created with the inherited wisdom of its two founders, a Buddhist Raja and a commonsensical Scottish physician. The goal of life on Pala is to merge with the clear light, not to accumulate possessions; the island's philosophy is a mix of Eastern thought (particularly tantric Buddhism, which does not retreat from the world, but uses it for higher purposes), Western science (but with limited technology), unrepressed sexuality, and constant mindfulness. (The island's fauna include mynah birds trained to say, "Attention! Attention!") Huxley's ideas about childrearing, psychedelic visions, and tending to the dying were far ahead of his time, and his portrait of a utopia in which those ideas are implemented will intrigue anyone who is interested in a more spiritually directed society.



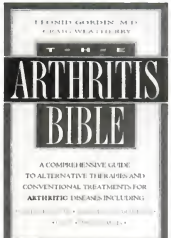
Aldous Huxley

**A Good Man is Hard to Find** *by Flannery O'Connor.* In this book of stories (and in her posthumous collection, *Everything That Rises Must Converge*), Flannery O'Connor put the twisted vision and dark humor of Southern Gothic fiction to spiritual purposes. Though O'Connor, a rural Southerner, knew she would die young of lupus, she remained a faithful Catholic. Indeed, she was determined to undermine the '50s worldview which saw science and logic as steadily leading us to becoming a society based on rationality, consumerism, and progress, which would make God superfluous. Acutely aware of the extremes of religion in the South, she nonetheless preferred that "God-haunted" region to a bland world produced by advertising. She believed the supernatural lay just below the surface of the everyday, requiring the spiritual artist to portray the mundane world with great care and accuracy, however bizarre some of its events and characters might be. O'Connor saw the potential for mysterious grace in any place where the spirit, though twisted, was still alive. Her writing is powerful, at times violent, often hilarious. Sometimes I find it best to read her a little at a time; her unconquerable wit and her deep, abiding spirituality always shine through.



Flannery O'Connor

**A Passage to India** *by E. M. Forster.* The "passage" here is made by an older

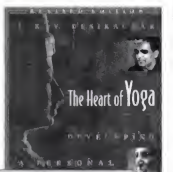




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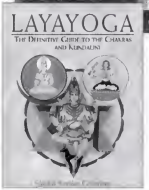



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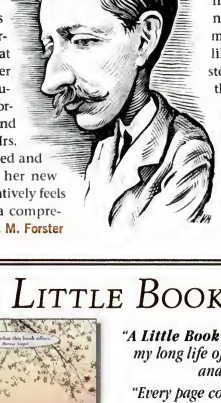
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Englishwoman, Mrs. Moore, traveling to India to see her son, a British civil servant. She heads East in search of a larger view, but initially she encounters fragmentation. Hindu, Muslim, and British India are not merely different worldviews but virtually parallel worlds. Most of the English keep to themselves, but Mrs. Moore ventures out into a teeming world in which the natural is always deeply infused with the supernatural, where "to realize what God is seems more important than to do what God wants." Forster portrays her spiritual journey so authoritatively that we find ourselves, like Mrs. Moore, enlightened and overwhelmed by her new world, as she tentatively feels her way toward a comprehensive nonattachment which is finally more Hindu than British.



E. M. Forster

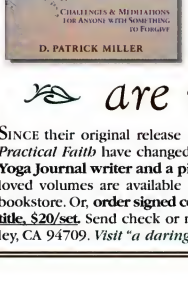
**The Bhagavad-Gita** *translated by Christopher Isherwood and Swami Prabhavananda.* If I had to choose one book to take to a desert island, this would be it. The ageless "Song of God" is, of course, a magnificent, sacred scripture and not technically a novel, but its narrative form makes it read like one. The *Gita* tells the story of Arjuna, who turns to the God Krishna, his friend, for explanations and advice on life. Krishna lays out an entire worldview, the philosophy of Vedanta, one of the great achievements of human thought. Christopher Isherwood, an English novelist, and Swami Prabhavananda, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and Isherwood's guru, translate the *Gita* in a simple, modern style, alternating between prose and poetry without sacrificing the majesty and wisdom of this ancient story. Krishna gives Arjuna simple advice which I have found so useful in my own life, such as not to do anything for results, but rather for God: "You can have the work," he tells Arjuna, "but not the products of the work."



Christopher Isherwood

*Gerald Rosen is the author of five novels, most recently* Mahatma Gandhi in a Cadillac *(North Atlantic, 1995), and the nonfiction work* Zen in the Art of J. D. Salinger *(Celestial Arts, 1977). Professor Emeritus of Creative Writing at Sonoma State University, he lives in San Francisco.*


# Two Little Books That Change Lives

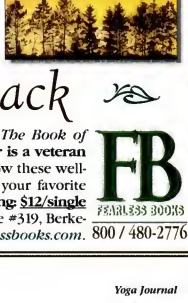



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### THE PATH OF LIGHT

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# Briefly Noted Books

Reviewed by Holly Hammond

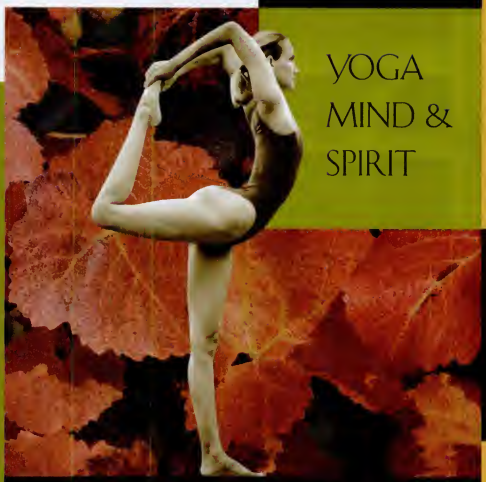
## YOGA & HEALTH

**SRI NATHAMUNI'S YOGARAHASYA** *presented by T. Krishnamacharya (Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram, 13, 4th Cross St., Ramakrishna Nagar, Chennai-28, India).* The *Yogarahasya* (secrets of yoga) is a ninth-century text thought to have been lost until it was revealed in trance to Sri Krishnamacharya, a descendent of Sri Nathamuni, when Krishnamacharya was 16. It was translated into English by his son, T.K.V. Desikachar, and is now published for the first time. Readers will be gratified by the detail in which its verses address the practice of yoga: the choice of time and place for practice, remedies for ailments, and asana and pranayama for achieving health as well as spiritual enrichment. "The fruits of yoga can be classified into material benefits (*bhukti*) and the vision of the Lord (*mukti*)." This text guides the reader to both.

**THE DEVI GITA: THE SONG OF THE GODDESS** *translated by C. Mackenzie Brown (SUNY).* The fifteenth-century *Devi Gita,* an important but little-known text from the goddess tradition of India, was revealed by the Mother Goddess Bhuvanesvari, Ruler of the Universe, who is independent from any male consort. She speaks here about spiritual disciplines (the yogas) including asana, pranayama, kundalini, and bhakti. She describes both external practice ("Abandoning all desire, taking refuge in me alone") and internal practice ("Focus your awareness on my form that is pure



# 4th annual YOGA JOURNAL convention



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NEW FOR 1999:
YOGA TEACHER TRAINING
September 28-30

**OCTOBER 2-4, 1999**
**ESTES PARK, COLORADO**
**PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOPS OCTOBER 1**

## CONVENTION AT A GLANCE

### tuesday, wednesday, thursday
### september 28, 29, 30, 1999

9:30 am-4:30 pm Teacher Training

### thursday, september 30

4:00 pm-8:00 pm Registration

### friday, october 1

7:30 am-7:30 pm Registration
9:30 am-4:30 pm Pre-Convention Workshops
5:30 pm-7:30 pm Dinner
8:00 pm-9:30 pm Welcome
Keynote by Beryl Bender Birch

### saturday, october 2

6:00 am-10:00 am Breakfast
7:00 am -8:45 am Yoga Classes
8:00 am-9:45 am Yoga Classes
11:30 am-1:00 pm Yoga Classes & Workshops
1:00 pm-2:30 pm Lunch
3:45 pm-5:30 pm Yoga Classes & Workshops
5:30 pm-7:30 pm Dinner
8:00 pm-9:00 pm Slide Show
8:00 pm-10:00 pm Dance Party

### sunday, october 3

6:00 am-6:45 am Meditation
6:00 am-10:00 am Breakfast
7:00 am-8:45 am Yoga Classes
8:00 am-9:45 am Yoga Classes
11:30 am-1:00 pm Yoga Classes & Workshops
1:00 pm-2:30 pm Lunch
3:45 pm-5:30 pm Yoga Classes & Workshops
5:30 pm-7:30 pm Dinner
8:00 pm-9:30 pm Evening of Community Talent

### monday, october 4

6:00 am-8:45 am Breakfast
9:00 am-9:45 am Closing Ceremony
Keynote by Stephen Cope
10:00 am-12:00 pm Yoga Classes & Workshops
12:30 pm-2:00 pm Lunch

# TEACHER TRAINING

### tuesday, wednesday, thursday
### september 28, 29, 30, 1999

Learn the art of teaching yoga with six of the world's top yoga teachers. Mary Dunn, Richard Freeman, Judith Lasater, Erich Schiffmann, Victor van Kooten, and Patricia Walden will conduct this intensive, three-day seminar. Learn to read the body, to sequence postures, to make adjustments, and to apply the ancient philosophy of yoga to modern life. Each participant will spend a half-day with each teacher. Class size will be limited to 50 students each.

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1999

**4:00 pm - 8:00 pm** registration

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1999

**7:30 am - 7:30 pm** registration

**9:30 am - 4:30 pm** PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOPS

**11 separate all-day sessions; choose one for $115**
**12:30 pm-2:00 pm Lunch**

### yoga: empowerment for women

**ANGELA FARMER**

Returning to the wisdom of our inner body, we unravel from the scars and wounds that may have disturbed or distorted our femininity. The practice is organic and empowering, restoring faith in our uniqueness and beauty as women. P1

### istha yoga: the science of the self

**ALAN FINGER**

In this workshop you will begin to determine what blend of techniques you require to experience the unbound, unlimited Self at the core of your being. The day will culminate in a practice of asana, pranayama, and tantric meditation. P2

### flowing with grace

**JOHN FRIEND**

Enjoy a full experience of Anusara Yoga through the practice of meditation, pranayama, and a broad spectrum of postures. P3



**MICHAEL LEE,** M.A., is the founder of Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy. He has practiced and taught yoga for more than 20 years. Michael currently leads workshops throughout North America, Australia, and Europe. He recently published a book, *Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy—Bridge From Body to Soul.* He has served as guest faculty at the Omega Institute, the Open Center, and the Interface Foundation, and has presented his work at Duke University and Findhorn in Scotland.



**DAVID LIFE** is codirector of Jivamukti Yoga Center in New York. He received teaching certification from K. Patabhi Jois in the Ashtanga method and studies regularly in India. In 1991 was inducted into the sunyas order of Sri Shankaracharya by Swami Nirmalananda.



**ELISE MILLER,** M.A. in Therapeutic Recreation, is a certified senior Iyengar teacher who is a long-time student of B.K.S. Iyengar. She has studied with the Iyengars in India numerous times. Elise corrected her own scoliosis with yoga and has been specializing in the use of yoga for back problems for 27 years.

4th YOGA JOURNAL

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**ELISE MILLER,** *Restorative Yoga.* A class for all levels based on the teachings of B.K.S. Iyengar to reduce stress and create a meditative state. Please bring four firm blankets, belt, and eye cover. **4YEM**

**RICHARD ROSEN,** *Yoga Asanas and the Nine Essential Lines of Movement.* All levels. The practice of ideokinesis or "imagined movement" centers on nine essential lines of movement. We will explore these lines, then apply them to basic yoga asanas. **4YRR**

**RICHARD FREEMAN,** *Mulabandha in Breathing and Alignment.* Join us for a detailed study of this essential and elusive movement in postures and pranayama. **4YRF**

**JOHN SCHUMACHER,** *Do the Twists.* Spinal twists for experienced students. **4YJS**

**THOM BIRCH & BERYL BENDER BIRCH,** *Learning the Primary Series of Ashtanga Yoga.* Moderately paced class for those new to the ashtanga sequencing of postures and vinyasa, the connecting movement between postures. Explanations of some ashtanga basics like ujjayi breathing, mula and uddiyana bandha, and vinyasa. **4YTB**

**3:45 pm - 5:30 pm**

## WORKSHOPS

**KRISHNA DAS,** *Kirtan.* Through chanting, meditation, spiritual readings, and discussion, a space is offered where the heart can open naturally from within. **4WKD**

**K. P. KHALSA,** *Anti-aging Herbs and Remedies.* Learn about specific herbs and remedies that are commonly used to promote longevity and well-being. **4WKP**

**JULIE LAWRENCE,** *Deepening Your Yoga Practice.* It is often difficult to begin or maintain an ongoing practice. In this interactive workshop we will explore our own yoga practice and learn to enliven and deepen it. **4WJL**

**MICHAEL LEE,** *The Art of Teaching: Matching Style and Intention.* Illustration of various teaching styles and their impact. Several important distinctions including that between yoga education and yoga instruction will be raised. **4WML**

**NISCHALA DEVI,** *Introduction to the Chakras.* The whirling vortices of energy called chakras are connected through channels that flow up and down our spines. When they are unobstructed, the energy easily flows; when the stresses of everyday life interfere, the flow is hindered. **4WND**



**GARY KRAFTSOW,** *Reading the Body for Yoga Therapy.* Refine your ability to see and understand what is happening in the body during practice, and learn how to adapt postures based on your observations. 3WGK

**ESTHER MYERS,** *Facing Breast Cancer.* An opportunity for students who are facing breast cancer now or who are survivors to discuss ways that yoga helps them. Teachers, learn how to help your students through this challenge. 3WEM

**NISCHALA DEVI,** *The Maya Koshas in Deep Relaxation.* All five bodies, or maya koshas, must come into alignment for relaxation to happen. We will explore and experience the five layers covering our true self, finding the obstacles that keep us from experiencing a natural balance of peace. 3WND

**ROBERT SVOBODA,** *Managing Your Condition.* The ayurvedic management of health and illness and the utility of yoga in dealing with health issues. We will focus on several respiratory conditions, including the common cold and asthma. 3WRS

**DEBORAH RAOULT,** *Teaching Yoga for the Childbearing Year: Part I, Prenatal Focus.* The ways yoga practice can support women through this fundamental life change. Experiential work, discussion of practical applications, and help with issues such as body image, discomfort, and childbearing loss. 3WDR

**1:00 pm - 2:30 pm** lunch

**3:45 pm - 5:30 pm** YOGA CLASSES

**EMMY CLEAVES,** *Bikram Yoga Master Class.* Experience the key to the kingdom of health, Bikram's 26-posture flow, as taught by a senior teacher at Bikram's Yoga College of India in Beverly Hills. 4YEC

**MARY DUNN,** *Inversions.* Practice and understand balance, alignment, and extension and reveal the invaluable meditative qualities in these key postures. 4YMD

**ANGELA FARMER,** *Chaos and Form: Evolving Asana.* By surrendering to Mother Chaos and the rhythms of Nature, we are able to more fully utilize the power of form, of posture. 4YAF

**FRANCOIS RAOULT,** *Everything in Moderation, Including Moderation.* An ayurvedic approach to the practice of asana and pranayama according to your prakruti. Practice and discussion. 4YFR

**JOHN FRIEND,** *Balancing: Dancing with Gravity.* Learn to laugh and dance on your hands and feet through a variety of balancing postures. 4YJF

**SHARON GANNON & DAVID LIFE,** *Ahimsa (Nonharming): The Touchstone of Patanjali's Eight-Limbed Path.* The path of nonviolence is the benevolent path of the Jivanmuktah. Liberation is easily achieved through surrender of selfish motives. 4YSG

**JUDITH LASATER,** *The Big M: Asanas for Menopause.* Active and restorative poses to even out hormonal swings. For women of all ages. 4YJL



**GARY KRAFTSOW,** M.A., L.M.T., began his study with Desikachar in 1974, has taught yoga and practiced yoga therapy since 1976, and has been training teachers and therapists in the U.S. and Europe since 1980. In 1983 he completed a Masters program in psychology and religion, focusing his study on health as a paradigm for spiritual transformation. He is currently writing two books for Viking/Penguin: one on yoga therapy; the other on yoga and spiritual transformation.



**KRISHNA DAS** was a student of Neem Karoli Baba, who taught him kirtan, chanting the name of God. He has recorded two CDs of chants



**JUDITH LASATER** has an eclectic background including 28 years of instructing yoga, certification as a physical therapist, and a Ph.D. in East-West psychology. She is recognized as an international authority on asana, therapeutics, and integrating the *Yoga Sutra* into daily life.



**JULIE LAWRENCE** is a certified Iyengar Yoga instructor who has been teaching for 22 years. She has studied with B.K.S. and Geeta Iyengar many times. She is director of the Julie Lawrence Yoga Center in Portland, Oregon.



**SHARON GANNON** is dedicated ta the teaching af yoga as a transcendental and spiritual practice. Her energy comes from the generaus gifts received from her gurus, Sri Brahmananda Sarasvati, Swami Nirmalananda, Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, Bhagavan Das, and Shyam Das. She has been teaching yoga since 1987 and returns to India each year to further her studies. Together with David Life, she has developed the Jivamukti Yoga practice.



**GABRIELLA GIUBILARO** has an eclectic background including 27 years af instructing yoga, certificatian as a physical therapist, and a Ph.D. in East-West psychology. She is recognized as an international authority on asana, therapeutics, and integrating the *Yoga Sutra* into daily life.



**KARTA PURKH SINGH KHALSA,** A.H.G., with aver 20 years of experience, is one of the foremost herbal experts taday. His wark has focused on the medical and therapeutic value af yoga, meditatian, and other studies af consciousness. He is a member of the American Herbalists Guild, author af two books, *Kinesionics: A Pattern for Life and Health* and *Kinesianics Nutritianal Encyclapedia*, and is caauthor af the forthcoming *Herbal Defense*, on the use af herbs for staying healthy in the '90s.



tion with spontaneous "complimentary stretches." Body and breath awareness for developing states of concentration capable of penetrating the deep inner bodies. 3YSC

**BARBARA BENAGH,** *Repatterning Breath Rhythm for Asthma & Stress.* Poor breathing exacerbates, or even causes, asthma and anxiety. How to recover a natural resting rhythm and avoid inappropriate "fight or flight" reactions. 3YBB

**ALAN FINGER,** *Ishta Yoga and Tantra.* An initiation into various tantric techniques used by Ishta Yoga to expand consciousness to its fullest potential. 3YAF

**DAVID LIFE & SHARON GANNON,** *Ahimsa (Nonharming): The Touchstone of Patanjali's Eight-Limbed Path.* The path of nonviolence is the benevolent path of the Jivanmuktah. Liberation is easily achieved through surrender of selfish motives. 3YDL

**GABRIELLA GIUBILARO,** *Twists, Level I.* How to use the alignment of the body in the twist poses. 3YGG

**JULIE LAWRENCE,** *Sweet Surrender: Forward Bends.* We meet our Self in the forward bending poses. Experience the calm joy that a well-designed practice offers. 3YJL

**RAMANAND PATEL,** *Sirsasana and Sarvangasana.* Headstand and Shoulderstand are often called "the soul of yoga." For students who are practicing these poses daily. 3YRP

**SARAH POWERS,** *Awareness and Acceptance: Vinyasa Yoga and Meditation.* A strong flow-style practice with focus on breath and form, while cultivating the inner witness through the mindfulness techniques of meditation. 3YSP

**RICHARD ROSEN,** *Homage to the Source.* Intermediate level. "There are 84 hundreds of thousands of asanas . . . . Among them 84 are the best; and among these . . . 32 have been found useful for mankind in this world." This class will present a sequence of these classic 32 asanas from the *Gheranda-Samhita*. 3YRR

**ROD STRYKER,** *Tantric-Hatha Yoga.* A dynamic and vigorous asana practice combining vinyasa flow, classic poses, and long holds. The class will include introductory pranayama and tantric meditation techniques. All levels welcome. 3YRS

**VICTOR VAN KOOTEN,** *Healing Body and Mind.* Learn how to face health problems through yoga practice with "inner body yoga." 3YVV

**11:30 am - 1:00 pm**

## WORKSHOPS

**BERYL BENDER BIRCH & THOM BIRCH,** *What Is Pranayama?* What is the point of doing pranayama? What does Patanjali say about it? How do we start? Some basic methods, plus discussion and practice. 3WTB

**STEPHEN COPE & ANNE CUSHMAN,** *Raja Yoga I.* Ethical practices are the foundation of the practical psychology of yoga. We will take a fresh, nondogmatic look at the ethical principles of yama and niyama and their power to transform your life. 3WSC

**RICHARD FREEMAN**, *Introduction to Ashtanga Yoga.* A step-by-step exploration of the basic thread of form, breathing, and movement upon which the classical series of postures is strung. **2YRF**

**K.P. KHALSA**, *Kundalini Yoga for a Strong Immune System.* Over centuries yoga has developed powerful techniques to ensure resistance to disease. In this class we will focus on vigorous exercise and breathing practices to enhance immune function. **2YKK**

**JUDITH LASATER**, *Asana Flows for Experienced Students.* Enjoy linking traditional poses in new ways. **2YJL**

**MICHAEL LEE**, *A Phoenix Rising Partner Yoga Class.* A series of partner postures, each with a particular life focus. Inner dialogue will accompany each posture. Suitable for both partners and singles. **2YML**

**RAMANAND PATEL**, *The Art of Sitting.* The use of props and preparatory poses to facilitate the classical seated postures. For students who would like to develop a steady seated posture for pranayama or meditation. **2YRP**

**FRANCOIS RAOULT**, *Preludes and Postludes.* Various ways to open and resolve your yoga practice or your yoga class. **2YFR**

**JOHN SCHUMACHER**, *Standing Poses.* Learn to stand on your own two feet. Suitable for all levels. **2YJS**

**VICTOR VAN KOOTEN**, *Healing Body and Mind.* Learn how to face health problems through yoga practice with "inner body yoga." **2YVV**

**PATRICIA WALDEN**, *Move Forward with Backbends.* Learn to focus and channel the dynamic energy of backbends into a peaceful, internal reservoir of vitality. Suitable for beginners. **2YPW**

**DEBORAH RAOULT**, *Fluid and Soft Tissue Support in Asana, I.* How can we include our intrinsic fluidity in yoga poses? An introduction to prevertebrate developmental movement, drawn from the Body Mind Centering work of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. **2YDR**

**11:30 am - 1:00 pm** YOGA CLASSES

**STEPHEN COPE**, *Kripalu Yoga, Stage II: Connecting with the Subtle Body.* Intermediate. Slow, deliberate movement in and out of asanas, with long holdings and experimenta-





**ANGELA FARMER** is a former physical educator and creative-movement teacher who has studied Iyengar Yoga for 10 years. She has traveled extensively in India to study with great masters.



**ALAN FINGER** is founder of Yoga Zone studia in New Yark. He studied with his father, Kavi Yogiraj Mani Finger, and developed Ishta Yoga, a blend af ashtanga, vinyasa, Iyengar, and kriya and tantric practices.



**RICHARD FREEMAN** has been a student af yoga since 1969. He has spent nearly nine years in Asia studying various traditians which he incarporates into the ashtanga yoga practice as taught by Sri K. Pattabhi Jois af Mysore, India. He remains an avid student af philasophy and Sanskrit, which he blends into his unique metapharical teaching style.



**JOHN FRIEND** has been a seriausly playful student of yoga since 1973. His hatha yoga style is called Anusara Yoga, which cambines universal principles af alignment, the art af inner body awareness, and the celebratian af the heart. John is the creator af two highly acclaimed yoga videas: *Yoga Alignment and Farm* and *Yoga for Meditators.* Jahn has also written the "Far Beginners" calumn for *Yoga Journal.*



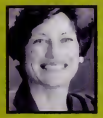
**EMMY CLEAVES** has practiced yoga for 45 years, the past 25 in the Bikram style. She is director of the Bikram Yoga College of India in Beverly Hills.



**STEPHEN COPE** is scholar-in-residence at Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Lenox, Mass., where he was senior program director for many years. His interest is the interface between Western psychology and Eastern traditions. He is author of *Yoga and the Quest for the True Self* (Bantam). He teaches a meditative style of yoga.



**ANNE CUSHMAN,** former senior editor of *Yoga Journal,* is a certified yoga teacher and author of *From Here to Nirvana: The Yoga Journal Guide to Spiritual India.*



**MARY DUNN** has been a student of B.K.S. Iyengar since 1974. Her clear and positive teaching of asana and philosophy is a vital force in the Iyengar community worldwide.

4th annual YOGA JOURNAL convention

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## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1999

**6:00 am - 10:00 am** breakfast

**7:00 am - 8:45 am** YOGA CLASSES

**THOM BIRCH & BERYL BENDER BIRCH,** *Healing with Ashtanga Yoga: The Primary Series.* An opportunity to practice the classic "led" form of yoga chikitsa (yoga therapy), the first series of ashtanga yoga. Come work out the kinks and toxins with mindful asana, pranayama, and prana dharana (energy concentration). **1YTB**

**BARBARA BENAGH,** *Yoga from the Core.* Asanas express the flow of the life force within us. Daily stress and illness can sever our connection to this instinctual "knowing." We will alternate challenging asana with passive traction. Movement is slow and watchful, to spark recollection and restoration of the potent core. **1YBB**

**GARY KRAFTSOW,** *Bandhas.* Experience the powerful inner tools of psychophysical transformation esteemed by the tantric yogis of India. We will systematically explore the theory and practice of the bandhas and develop and practice a sequence of asana and pranayama designed to support their use. **1YGK**

**ELISE MILLER,** *Asana Flows.* An Iyengar-based flow class for all levels. Moving through the poses with fluidity as well as precise attention to detail. Expect an energized, challenging, and fun class. **1YEM**

**ERICH SCHIFFMANN,** *Guided from Within.* Yoga is a way of moving into stillness in order to be guided from within. Meditative awareness combined with creative sequencing of poses allows you to move with precision and alignment without becoming rigid in form. **1YES**

**8:00 am - 9:45 am** YOGA CLASSES

**EMMY CLEAVES,** *Bikram Yoga Master Class.* Experience the key to the kingdom of health, Bikram's 26-posture flow as taught by a senior teacher at Bikram's Yoga College of India in Beverly Hills. **2YEC**

**MARY DUNN,** *Standing Postures.* Train the mind and develop the intelligence of the body in these postures, which have immediate practical application and long-term transformative possibilities. **2YMD**

**ANGELA FARMER,** *The Inner Teacher.* We shall explore ways to contact our "inner guide" to help both our own practice and our teaching. **2YAF**



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## ahimsa: the touchstone of patanjali's path

**SHARON GANNON & DAVID LIFE**

Jivamukti Yoga combines ancient spiritual teachings with a vigorous hatha yoga practice. In the context of the first yama, ahimsa, we will explore all the elements of a Jivamukti class, including asana, breath awareness, chanting, and meditation. P4

## forward bends

**GABRIELLA GIUBILARO**

How to use the legs to expand the chest in forward bends. P5

## ashtanga yoga

**BERYL BENDER BIRCH & THOM BIRCH** P6

## healing with the teachings of viniyoga

**GARY KRAFTSOW**

Principles and practices of yoga therapy, derived from Patanjali and ayurveda, for common aches and pains, chronic diseases, and troubling emotional conditions. P7

## yoga for back care

**ELISE MILLER**

For students/teachers with scoliosis, neck and shoulder problems, lower back tension, disc disease, sciatica, etc. Lecture/demo/slide show and yoga class for back care. P8

## the spirit of healing through yoga

**RAMANAND PATEL**

The physical, psychological, and spiritual theory and practice of poses. Students should have a minimum of one year of Iyengar yoga. P9

## tantra: the soul of yoga

**ROD STRYKER**

Tantra utilizes asana, pranayama, and a variety of meditation and energetic techniques. We will delve into the art of transformation through practice and theory. P10

## ayurvedic principles & practices in healing

**DR. ROBERT SVOBODA**

Ayurveda's core approach to the recovery of health, including practical methods for cultivating wellness on all levels of being. P11

**5:30 pm - 7:30 pm** dinner

**8:00 pm - 9:30 pm** welcome/keynote address

*Yoga Now: Breathe In, Breathe Out* with Beryl Bender Birch



**BARBARA BENAGH** teaches in Boston, where she has developed an eclectic and meditative style. Using poetic imagery and close attention to the rhythm and intelligence of the breath, she invites asana to emerge from the substantive core, encouraging students to trust their senses and move with feeling.



**THOM BIRCH** has been practicing and teaching ashtanga yoga since 1982. He is codirector of The Hard & The Soft Astanga Yoga Institute in New York City.



**BERYL BENDER BIRCH** has been studying and teaching the classical ashtanga yoga path and practice since 1974. She is founder and codirector of The Hard & The Soft Astanga Yoga Institute in New York City. She is the author of *Power Yoga*.

4th annual YOGA JOURNAL convention

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**ROBERT SVOBODA,** *Auto-Immune Diseases.* How these diseases are born and the way the three doshas cause these conditions to develop. Ayurvedic and yogic management of a few of these conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis and MS. 4WRS

**5:30 pm - 7:30 pm** dinner

**8:00 pm - 9:00 pm** slide show

Anne Cushman and Jerry Jones, coauthors of *From Here to Nirvana: The Yoga Journal Guide to Spiritual India,* present a narrated slide show based on their book, with stories of their adventures with spiritual masters, yogis, and saints.

**8:00 pm - 10:00 pm** dance party

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1999

**6:00 am - 6:45 am** meditation

**6:00 am - 10:00 am** breakfast

**7:00 am - 8:45 am** YOGA CLASSES

**JULIE LAWRENCE,** *Sweet Surrender: Forward Bends.* We meet our Self in the forward bending poses. Experience the calm joy that a well-designed forward bend practice offers. 5YJL

**RAMANAND PATEL,** *The Art of Sitting.* The use of props and preparatory poses to facilitate the classical seated asanas. For students who would like to develop a steady seated posture for pranayama or meditation. 5YAB

**SARAH POWERS,** *Awareness and Acceptance: Vinyasa Yoga and Meditation.* Can our yoga practice free us from the habit of identifying with our body/mind mechanism? A strong flow-style practice with focus on breath and form, while cultivating the inner witness through the mindfulness techniques of meditation. 5YSP

**FRANCOIS RAOULT,** *Finding Your Roots.* Tadasana as a blueprint for sitting meditation and standing poses in the Iyengar tradition. 5YFR

**RICHARD ROSEN,** *Foundation: The Standing Postures.* Beginning level. The standing asanas are the foundation of the Iyengar approach to hatha yoga. A preliminary course in twists and bends and balancing acts common to all the asanas. 5YRR





**ESTHER MYERS** studied intensively with Vanda Scaravelli. She is author of *Yoga and You* and director of Esther Myers' Yoga Studio in Toronto. A breast cancer survivor, she coordinates a yoga program for women with breast cancer.



**NISCHALA JOY DEVI** (formerly Swami Nischalananda) specializes in the subtle use of body and mind in healing and stress management. She cofounded the award-winning Cammanweal Cancer Help Program and is director of the Stress Management Program for the haspital-based version of Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease. Her book *Healing Heart and Soul* will be published in February 2000 by Random House.



**RAMANAND PATEL** first learned yoga at age 12 from his father. He has studied with B.K.S. Iyengar since 1968 and since 1974 has trained teachers at the San Francisca Iyengar Institute. He teaches worldwide and is known for innovative use of praps and helping students with special needs.



**SARAH POWERS** teaches vinyasa flaw-style practice, linking postures with breath while maintaining an awareness of details, both physical and energetic. She also incarporates Buddhist meditatian techniques into her classes.



**DEBORAH RAOULT** integrates yoga poses with Body Mind Centering and Continuum work. She is codirector of the Center for Aplomb and Yoga in Rochester, NY, and teaches yogo for the childbearing year.



**FRANCOIS RAOULT** is codirector of the Center for Aplamb and Yaga in Rochester, N.Y. He recently jained the faculty af the International Yoga Studies Pragram. His primary teachers have been B.K.S. Iyengar, Noelle Perez-Christioens, Thich Nhot Honh, and Robert Svabodo.



**RICHARD ROSEN** is a cantributing editar af *Yoga Jaurnal* and deputy director af the Yoga Research and Educationol Center in narthern Califarnia. He teaches caurses an pranayama and the *Yoga-Sutra* for the Advanced Studies Program at the Yogo Room in Berkeley. He is currently at wark an twa books far Rodmell Press, a beginning guide to pranayomo ond a collection of interviews with American yoga teachers.



## 8:00 am - 9:45 pm YOGA CLASSES

**BERYL BENDER BIRCH & THOM BIRCH,** *Learning the Primary Series of Ashtanga Yoga.* Moderately paced class for those with yoga experience but new to the ashtanga sequencing of postures and vinyasa, the connecting movement between postures. Ujjayi breathing, mula and uddiyana bandha. **6YTB**

**BARBARA BENAGH,** *Yoga from the Core.* We will alternate challenging asana with passive traction. Movement is slow and watchful, to spark recollection and restoration of the potent core. **6YBB**

**ANGELA FARMER & VICTOR VAN KOOTEN,** *Yoga from the Inner Body.* The balance of masculine and feminine energies. **6YAF**

**JOHN FRIEND,** *Touch the Sky.* Learn the universal principles of alignment to open your shoulders, arms, and wrists through a rainbow of postures. **6YJF**

**SHARON GANNON & DAVID LIFE,** *Ahimsa (Nonharming): The Touchstone of Patanjali's Eight-Limbed Path.* The perfect thought, which leads to the perfect action, is a thought free of violence. The Jivanmuktah knows that freedom from thoughts is the end of suffering for all. **6YSG**

**GABRIELLA GIUBILARO,** *Twists, Level II.* A practical approach to alignment to improve your twists. **6YGG**

**ELISE MILLER,** *Life Is a Stretch.* All levels. We will do poses suitable for office, airplane, and other situations (as seen in Elise's new book, *Life Is a Stretch*). How to begin a personal practice. **6YEM**

**K. P. KHALSA,** *Kundalini Yoga for the Liver and Detoxification.* Detoxification is of foremost importance in healing. Physical exercise and breathing techniques to help eliminate waste, cleanse the blood, and prepare for rebuilding. **6YKK**

**GARY KRAFTSOW,** *Asana in the Viniyoga Tradition: Twists.* We will use the principles of breath, adaptation, and sequencing to create a powerful, whole-body experience of twisting that will leave you feeling deeply nourished and totally present. **6YGK**

**ERICH SCHIFFMANN,** *Getting in Touch with the Inner Teacher.* Meditative awareness combined with creative sequencing of poses allows you to move with precision and alignment without becoming rigid in form. **6YES**

**ROD STRYKER,** *Tantric-Hatha Yoga.* A dynamic and vigorous asana practice combining vinyasa flow, classic poses, and long holds. Introductory pranayama and tantric meditation techniques. All levels welcome. **6YRS**

**JOHN SCHUMACHER,** *Basics of Pranayama.* An introduction to the Iyengar approach to yogic breathing. Bring two sturdy blankets. **6YJS**

**RICHARD FREEMAN,** *Introduction to Ashtanga Yoga.* A step-by step exploration of the basic thread of form, breathing, and movement upon which the classical series of postures are strung. **6YRF**

**11:00 am - 12:30 pm** VOGA CLASSES

**EMMY CLEAVES,** *Bikram Yoga Master Class.* Experience the key to the kingdom of health, Bikram's 26-posture flow as taught by a senior teacher at Bikram's Yoga College of India in Beverly Hills. 7YEC

**MARY DUNN,** *Padmasana.* A series of postures opens and prepares the body for the practice of Lotus. Understand and change your postural habits and make Padmasana possible. 7YMD

**ALAN FINGER,** *ISHTA Yoga: Asana as a Tool.* Asana is a means of viewing where your mind has locked into your body, and how you can begin to release those unconscious suppressions. 7YAF

**MICHAEL LEE,** *Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy Master Class.* Postures incorporating elements of the Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy process will give participants the opportunity to use the body as an awareness bridge to many aspects of life experience. 7YML

**DAVID LIFE & SHARON GANNON,** *Ahimsa (Nonharming): The Touchstone of Patanjali's Eight-Limbed Path.* The perfect thought, which leads to the perfect action, is a thought free of violence. The Jivanmuktah knows that freedom from thoughts is the end of suffering for all. 7YDL

**ESTHER MYERS,** *Stretching Sideways.* Discover new space for breath and movement, as you lengthen and release the sides of your body. 7YEM

**RAMANAND PATEL,** *Twists.* The physiological, organic, and pranic levels of working with twists, theory and practice. Students should be practicing inversions regularly. 7YRP

**FRANCOIS RAOULT,** *Variations in the Dog Pose Major.* In-depth study of adho mukha svanasana and its variations will explore flexion and extension of the spine. Bring your own variation! 7YFR

**DEBORAH RAOULT,** *Fluid and Soft Tissue Support in Asana, II.* This second class will focus on an exploration of sound, breath, and nonpatterned movement as inspired by Emilie Conrad and the process of Continuum. First class is prerequisite. 7YDR

**JOHN SCHUMACHER,** *Introduction to Inversions.* The fundamentals of Sirsasana (Headstand) and Sarvangasana (Shoulderstand). No cervical problems, please. Bring at least two sturdy blankets. 7YJS

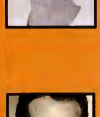
**PATRICIA WALDEN,** *Move Forward with Backbends.* Learn to focus and channel the dynamic energy of backbends into a peaceful, internal reservoir of vitality. Not suitable for beginners. 7YPW

**11:30 am - 1:00 pm** WORKSHOPS

**KRISHNA DAS,** *Kirtan.* Through chanting, meditation, spiritual readings, and discussion, a space is offered where the heart can open naturally from within. 7WKD



**ERICH SCHIFFMANN** has been practicing yoga for 30 years. His most influential mentor is Joel Kramer. His award-winning videa has sald mare than 250,000 copies. He is the author of *Yoga: The Spirit and Practice of Moving into Stillness* and is a writer for *Yoga Journal.*



**JOHN SCHUMACHER** is a langtime student af B.K.S. Iyengar and is a certified seniar Iyengar teacher. He is founder and directar af Unity Woods Yaga Center in the Washingtan, D.C. area.



**ROD STRYKER,** awner af Yagatapia in Las Angeles, is the mast seniar American-born teacher in the Ishta Yoga lineage—a tradition with raats in Raja, Tantric-Hatha, and Yogananda's Kriya Yogas. He has taught yoga and meditatian for mare than 18 years. He has written an Ishta manual, teaches araund the warld, and is the creatar af three best-selling yaga videas.

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**DR. ROBERT SVOBODA,** is the only Westerner to have completed a degree in Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery at the University of Poona, India. He studied in India for many years, learning jyotish and yoga as well as ayurveda and the tantric practices of his teacher, Vimalananda. He is the author of many books, including *Tao and Dharma, Ayurveda: Life, Health and Longevity* and *Prakruti: Your Ayurvedic Constitution.*



**VICTOR VAN KOOTEN** was inspired in his early days of yoga study by B.K.S. Iyengar and later by the reaction to the more external yoga approach. He has worked closely with Angela Farmer for 15 years creating a unique and supportive teaching style.



**PATRICIA WALDEN** is a classical Iyengar teacher who has studied with B.K.S. Iyengar, Geeta, and Prashant. She has a special interest in yoga for women. Her knowledge of asana, pranayama, and the *Yoga Sutras* provide the framework for her teaching. Patricia is the director of the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Center of Greater Boston. She is well known for her award-winning yoga videos and teaches internationally.

4th annual YOGA JOURNAL convention

(800) 587-9065

**THOM BIRCH & BERYL BENDER BIRCH,** *Yoga for Prostate Health.* Not for men only. Explore the use of yogic techniques for mental and physical recovery from prostate cancer and/or surgery. Questions, answers, and shared experiences. 7WTB

**STEPHEN COPE & ANNE CUSHMAN,** *The Practical Psychology of Karma.* Our own experiences with karma and practical strategies for working with it, including an examination of the first two limbs of yogic practice, yama and niyama. 7WSC

**K. P. KHALSA,** *Immune-Enhancing Herbs.* Viruses and bacteria are getting stronger and more resistant to treatment. Learn how to protect yourself by supporting and strengthening your immune system through the use of herbs. 7WKK

**MICHAEL LEE,** *Bridging Yoga and Psychotherapy.* Where does yoga end and psychotherapy begin? A one-on-one demonstration of Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy, including assisted posture technique, dialogue, and integration. 7WML

**NISCHALA DEVI,** *Healing with the Chakras.* Learn to open the energy in the chakras and correct any imbalances using simple methods. 7WND

**DR. ROBERT SVOBODA,** *Managing Your Condition.* Ayurvedic management of health and illness and the utility of yoga in dealing with health issues. We will focus on several respiratory conditions, including the common cold and asthma. 7WRS

**1:00 pm - 2:30 pm** lunch

**3:45 pm - 5:30 pm** VOGA CLASSES

**STEPHEN COPE,** *Kripalu Yoga, Stage III: Meditation in Motion.* Intermediate. Dynamic postures with long holdings and vinyasa designed to awaken prana and consciousness. An experience of posture flow and a deep yoga nidra. 8YSC

**MARY DUNN,** *Pratyahara.* Withdraw the senses and experience Savasana of the brain in asana practice, so this inner quest leads to profound Savasana. 8YMD

**ALAN FINGER,** *First Level ISHTA Meditation.* We will articulate the mind's relationship to the soul and initiate participants into layered meditation practice designed to accelerate one into an experience of bliss at one's core. 8YAF

**JOHN FRIEND,** *Unfolding a Lotus.* Open your hips through the magical light of alignment principles. 8YJF

**SHARON GANNON & DAVID LIFE,** *Ahimsa (Nonharming): The Touchstone of Patanjali's Eight-Limbed Path.* The perfect thought, which leads to the perfect action, is a thought free of violence. The Jivanmuktah knows that freedom from thoughts is the end of suffering for all. 8YSG

**GABRIELLA GIUBILARO,** *Backbends.* Raising awareness of the back of the body. For students who can push up to Urdhva Dhanurasana from the floor. 8YGG

**JUDITH LASATER,** *Restorative Yoga.* Meditative supported poses to reduce stress, jet lag, headaches, and fatigue. Please bring a sticky mat, at least three blankets, an eye cover, and other props if you have them. **8YJL**

**ESTHER MYERS,** *The Ground, the Breath, and the Spine: Teaching Basics.* Beginning and intermediate. Inspired by Vanda Scaravelli, this class will explore principles of breath awareness, gravity, and the wave of expansion in your spine. **8YEM**

**SARAH POWERS,** *Awareness and Acceptance: Vinyasa Yoga and Meditation.* Can our yoga practice free us from the habit of identifying with our body/mind mechanism? A strong flow-style practice with focus on breath and form, while cultivating the inner witness through the mindfulness techniques of meditation. **8YSP**

**ERICH SCHIFFMANN,** *Practicing from the Inside Out.* Meditative awareness combined with creative sequencing of poses allows you to move with precision and alignment without becoming rigid in form. **8YES**

**ROD STRYKER,** *Asana as Preparation for Pranayama and Meditation.* Using a specific sequence of asanas, we will explore the breath, prepare for pranayama, and through meditation move into the power of Soul. **8YRS**

**VICTOR VAN KOOTEN,** *Healing Body and Mind.* Learn how to face health problems through yoga practice with "inner body yoga." **8YVV**

**3:45 pm - 5:30 pm**

## WORKSHOPS

**BERYL BENDER BIRCH & THOM BIRCH,** *Yoga Therapy.* Learn how to read "patterns" of the asanas as a therapeutic tool in yourself and students. Use asana to restore health and balance after illness or injury. **8WTB**

**ANGELA FARMER,** *Moving Energy.* Bathed in prana, we absorb and are absorbed by it. This workshop will focus on becoming aware both of its power and how to direct it for health, vitality, and joy in our lives. **8WAF**

**JULIE LAWRENCE,** *Deepening Your Yoga Practice.* It is often difficult to begin or maintain an ongoing practice. In this interactive workshop we will explore our own yoga practice and learn to enliven and deepen it. **8WJL**

**ELISE MILLER,** *Yoga for Scoliosis.* For teachers who have students with scoliosis and students with this condition. A short lecture/demo and slide show. Principles of how yoga affects scoliosis and a yoga class for scoliosis. **8WEM**

**ROD STRYKER,** *The Tantra of Yoga.* We will explore the role subtle energy plays in the experience of inspiration, fulfillment, and even in shaping destiny. You will be guided into specific breathing, focusing techniques, and sound. All levels. **8WRS**

**PATRICIA WALDEN,** *Yoga for Depression.* We will discuss the physiology and symptoms of depression and how they can be addressed through yoga philosophy and yogasana. **8WPW**

## DISCOUNT TRAVEL

We have negotiated special discounted airfares to Denver through Gray Fox Travel, our preferred travel provider. Conference attendees will receive 5% off the lowest fare available and 10% off coach. We recommend that participants book as early as possible to receive the lowest fares. Contact Grey Fox at (800) 347-2936 between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. Be sure to mention the Yoga, Mind & Spirit Convention.

## AIRPORT SHUTTLE

As the trip from Denver International to the Estes Park Center is about two hours, we suggest using Estes Park Shuttle. For information, call them at (800) 586-5009. Round-trip fare is about $50. If three or more are traveling together, it can sometimes be more economical to rent a car. Contact Grey Fox Travel at (800) 347-2936 for car rental information.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

The lodging information on the next page should help you determine which room package you wish to book. Upon receiving your paid registration, we will forward you a room reservation form which needs to be returned to the YMCA of the Rockies. They do not accept phone reservations, but you can call them for general information at (970) 586-3341, extension 1021.



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## LODGE & MEAL INFORMATION

The Estes Park Center, "YMCA of the Rockies," offers a wide range of accommodations to suit every budget. Guest services and activities include: heated indoor swimming pool, tennis courts, mountain bike rental, hiking, general store, post office, and coin-operated laundry.

The following are the rates per person for a single night stay during the conference. This rate includes three vegetarian, cafeterio-style meals for each night's stay, through Monday lunch. Note that children (3–15 years) may stay for $14 a night per child in ony of the lodges.

**WIND RIVER LODGE** - Each room hos two queen-size beds ond one single futon
Single . . . $119 Two adults . . . $75
Three odults . . . $60.....Four odults . . . $52
Five adults . . . $48

**ALPEN INN** - Each room has two queen-size beds ond one queen-size sofa bed
Single . . . $119 Two adults . . . $75
Three adults. . . $60 Four adults. . . $52
Five adults . . . $48 Six adults . . . $45

**MOUNT YPSILON LODGE** - Each room has one double bed ond one set of bunk beds
Single . . . $92 Two adults . . . $61
Three adults . . . $51 Four adults . . . $46

**EAGLE CLIFF LODGE** - Each room has one queen-size bed ond one set of bunk beds
Single . . . $91 Two adults . . . $61
Three adults . . . $50 Four adults . . . $45

**EASTSIDE LODGES** - Each room hos three sets of bunk beds
Single . . . $78 Two adults . . . $54
Three odults . . . $46 Four odults . . . $42
Five adults . . . $40 Six adults . . . $38

If you are not staying on the grounds of the Center and wish to purchose meals individually, the prices are: breakfast $5.50, lunch $6.50, dinner $9.00.

**5:30 pm - 7:30 pm** **dinner**

**8:00 pm - 9:30 pm** **an evening of community talent**
(If you would like to share your talent, sign up at the convention registration desk. Then come prepared with a 3–5 minute piece.)

## MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1999

**6:00 am - 8:45 am** **breakfast**

**8:45 am - 9:45 am** **keynote address**
*Does Sangha Matter?*
*Community and Transformation in the New Millennium*
with Stephen Cope

**10:00 am - 12:00 am** YOGA CLASSES

**THOM BIRCH & BERYL BENDER BIRCH,** *Just Practice: Ashtanga Yoga.* An opportunity for practicing ashtanga yogis (all levels welcome) to do self practice in the traditional Indian method with safe and appropriate assistance. First or second series only. **9YTB**

**EMMY CLEAVES,** *Bikram Yoga Master Class.* Experience the key to the kingdom of health, Bikram's 26-posture flow as taught by a senior teacher at Bikram's Yoga College of India in Beverly Hills. **9YEC**

**BARBARA BENAGH,** *Yoga from the Core.* Asanas express the flow of the life force within us. Daily stress and illness can sever our connection to this instinctual "knowing." We will alternate challenging asana with passive traction. **9YBB**

**DAVID LIFE & SHARON GANNON,** *Ahimsa (Nonharming): The Touchstone of Patanjali's Eight-Limbed Path.* The perfect thought, which leads to the perfect action, is a thought free of violence. The Jivanmuktah knows that freedom from thoughts is the end of suffering for all. **9YDL**

**SARAH POWERS,** *Awareness and Acceptance: Vinyasa Yoga and Meditation.* Can our yoga practice free us from the habit of identifying with our body/mind mechanism? A strong flow-style practice with focus on breath and form, while cultivating the inner witness through the mindfulness techniques of meditation. **9YSP**

**RICHARD ROSEN,** *Asana and Your Groins.* Beginning level. The Iyengar system teaches that tight groins are caused not only by tight muscles but also by the misalignment of the hip joints. Learn to consciously channel this energy throughout the body and create a more integrated relationship with the "ground" of our being. **9YRR**

**ERICH SCHIFFMANN,** *The Essentials.* Meditative awareness combined with creative sequencing of poses allows you to move with precision and alignment without becoming rigid in form. **9YES**

**ALAN FINGER,** *The Laya Yoga Techniques of ISHTA Yoga.* An introduction to laya yoga, the yoga of dissolution. Learn the techniques of forgetting who you are not and remembering who you are. **9YAF**

**JOHN FRIEND,** *Backbends: Say Yes to Life.* Open your heart through universal principles of alignment, the breath, and an adventurous spirit. **9YJF**

**GABRIELLA GIUBILARO,** *Inversions.* Optimum use of gravity to improve your inverted poses. For students with some experience in Headstand. **9YGG**

**ESTHER MYERS,** *Breathing into Backbends.* Move into backbends with ease, as the wave of your breath releases and lengthens your spine. **9YEM**

**RICHARD FREEMAN,** *Introduction to Ashtanga Yoga.* A step-by-step exploration of the basic thread of form, breathing, and movement upon which the classical series of postures are strung. **9YRF**

## 10:00 am - 12:00 pm WORKSHOPS

**GARY KRAFTSOW,** *The Yoga Tradition of Meditation and Personal Ritual.* Explore the teachings and practices of meditation from the tradition you love! We will immerse ourselves in the inner practices of yoga, working with special combinations of asana, pranayama, mantra, chanting, and meditation. **9WGK**

**JUDITH LASATER,** *Lower Back Pain and Yoga.* Poses and theories for teachers; an overview of the causes of lower back pain and suggested poses to use in teaching. **9WJL**

**NISCHALA DEVI,** *Healing Heart and Soul.* Physical heart disease correlates with our emotional heart being closed. This workshop will offer practices proven to heal and open your heart and soul. **9WND**

**DEBORAH RAOULT,** *Teaching Yoga for the Childbearing Year: Part II, Postpartum Focus.* The ways yoga practice can support women through this fundamental life change. We will blend experiential work, discussion of practical applications, and help with issues such as body image, discomfort, and childbearing loss. **9WDR**

**ROBERT SVOBODA,** *Auto-Immune Diseases.* How these diseases are born and the way the three doshas cause them to develop. Ayurvedic and yogic management of a few of these conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis and MS. **9WRS**

**PATRICIA WALDEN,** *Yoga for Menopause.* Yogasana for making perimenopause and menopause more comfortable. Discussion and presentation of yogasana to tonify physiology and ameliorate symptoms. **9WPW**

## ALTITUDE

The Estes Park Center YMCA of the Rockies is located at over 8,000 feet elevation. As accommodations are very reasonable, you may want to consider coming a day early to allow yourself to adjust to the altitude. Also, weather is unpredictable in early October in the Rockies—we suggest you bring some warm clothing along with your regular yoga gear.

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

Adjoining Estes Park Center on three sides, Rocky Mountain National Park features some of the world's most spectacular scenery and natural environments. Hiking, climbing, cross-country skiing (in season), and other programs are available. For more information, contact the Park Headquarters at (970) 586-1206.

## TO REGISTER

Complete the registration form on the back of this brochure. Be sure to read the instructions carefully and enter your first and second choices for all time periods. You may register for the conference by itself or combine it with a pre-conference workshop.

Payment-in-full must accompany registration. Space is limited, so register early to secure the classes you want most. Registration forms must be postmarked by the deadlines listed in order to qualify for discounts.

To register by phone, call us toll free at (800) 587-9065 or (801) 519-0860. You can also fax your completed registration form to (801) 519-0861 or e-mail us at YogaMind@aol.com.

## PROPS

We suggest that you consider bringing yoga props and a meditation cushion with you, as well as a yoga mat. Cushions will provide you with an alternative to chair seating and are useful for meditation sessions. These items will also be available for sale in the conference exhibit area.

# REGISTRATION

(800) 587-9065

**YogaJournal**
For Health and Conscious Living

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE (DAY) (EVENING)

FAX E-MAIL

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher Training | $395 | $_____ |
| Pre-Convention Workshops (# ) | $115 | $_____ |
| Early before May 15, 1999 | $295 | $_____ |
| Advanced before July 15, 1999 | $335 | $_____ |
| Regular after July 15, 1999 | $375 | $_____ |
| Teacher Training & Pre-Convention Workshop | $465 | $_____ |
| Teacher Training, Pre-Convention Workshops & Convention | $695 | $_____ |
| **Registration must be postmarked by the deadline in order to qualify for discounts** | TOTAL | $_____ |

Fill in your first and second choices for classes below using the two letter pre-convention workshop code or the four letter class code for the various time periods. Choose carefully as there is a $10 charge for each class change made after you have registered.

| | *Friday (P) Pre-Convention (Additional Fee)* | *Saturday (1) 7:00am-8:45am or (2) 8:00am-9:45am* | *Saturday (3) 11:30am-1:00pm* | *Saturday (4) 3:45pm-5:30pm* | *Sunday (5) 7:00am-8:45am or (6) 8:00am-9:45am* | *Sunday (7) 11:30am-1:00pm* | *Sunday (8) 3:45pm-5:30pm* | *Monday (9) 10:00am-12:00am* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Choice | | | | | | | | |
| 2st Choice | | | | | | | | |

**REFUND POLICY:**
$100 charge per person for any cancellation made after June 1, but before September 1, 1999. No refunds after September 1, 1999. By signing below I certify that I have read the refund policy for this convention and agree to its provisions.

Payment: ❑ Visa ❑ MasterCard ❑ American Express ❑ Discover ❑ Check (To: Yoga, Mind & Spirit Convention)

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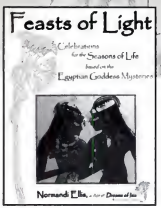
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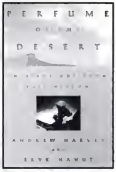



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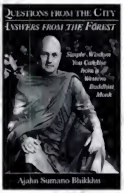



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consciousness, without using any conceptual support.") Brown's lyrical translation and helpful commentary make the text accessible to the general reader, and just hearing these stories, it's said, brings blessings: "What thoughtful person would ever tire of drinking the nectarine tales of Shakti? Death comes even to those who drink divine ambrosia, but not to one who hears this act of hers."

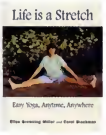
**YOGI BARE: NAKED TRUTH FROM AMERICA'S LEADING YOGA TEACHERS** *by Philip Self (Cypress Moon Press; P.O. Box 210925, Nashville, TN 37221; cypmoon@aol.com).* Despite its unfortunate title, here is a gift for practitioners: 20 engaging, insightful interviews with America's top yoga teachers. Among those sharing their personal stories are Lilias Folan, Rodney Yee, Patricia Walden, Donna Farhi, Thom and Beryl Birch, Baron Baptiste, and Vyaas Houston. They talk about how they got started and how they practice now. What they have to say will inspire you to persevere, to see your limitations as blessings, and to listen to your own inner voice. "Dive into yourself and let the ocean teach you," says Erich Schiffmann. "The universe is on your side, because you are the universe in specific expression."




**THE YOGA TRADITION** *by Georg Feuerstein (Hohm).* Scholar and practitioner Georg Feuerstein, arguably the foremost Western authority on yoga today, has accomplished the nearly impossible: a one-volume, systematic and fascinating introduction to and overview of Hindu spirituality. This revised and greatly enlarged edition of *Yoga: The Technology of Ecstasy* includes new translations of passages of the most important scriptures on yoga, beginning with the archaic *Rig Veda* and proceeding through the *Upanishads* and the tantras. Included are chapters on yoga in Buddhism, Patanjali, Shaivism, and Vedanta. This extraordinary volume is a must for any practitioner who wants to explore the depths of yoga.




**LIFE IS A STRETCH** *by Elise Browning Miller and Carol Blackman (Llewellyn).* Well-known yoga teacher Elise Miller brings us a first-rate book of "easy yoga" to be done "anytime, anywhere," including in the office, while stuck in traffic, or on an airplane. She shows us how to breathe and stretch using the principles of yoga whenever we need to energize, ease muscle aches, or relieve stress. The short routines are a thorough, gentle workout for anyone. Each chapter starts with breathing exercises, then gives stretches for particular situations or body conditions, and ends with a relaxation routine. Give this book to your sedentary uncle or aging mother and introduce them to the lifelong pleasures of yoga.






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**YOGA FOR BEGINNERS** *by Mark Ansari and Liz Lark (HarperPerennial).* A full program of asanas for beginners and intermediate practitioners is presented by British yoga teachers Ansari and Lark in a spiral-bound format that stands up, letting you keep your hands free. Several pranayama routines (kapalabhati, ujjayi, and alternate nostril breathing) and a meditation round out the program. Attractive, full-color photos clearly illustrate the poses.

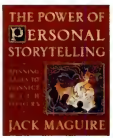
**PERSONAL RENEWAL** *by Letha Hadady (Harmony).* Acupuncturist and herbalist Letha Hadady describes seasonal rejuvenation regimens for physical and mental health. If you are recovering from illness or exhaustion or simply want to get in shape, instead of spending a fortune going to a spa, you can cleanse and restore yourself at home using these recipes. Included are Chinese and Western herbal treatments, homeopathic remedies, healing foods, beauty treatments for skin, hair, and weight loss, and things to do for computer-related pain. There are even virtual visits to the California desert, a Japanese health spa, and Miami Beach for a watermelon fast.



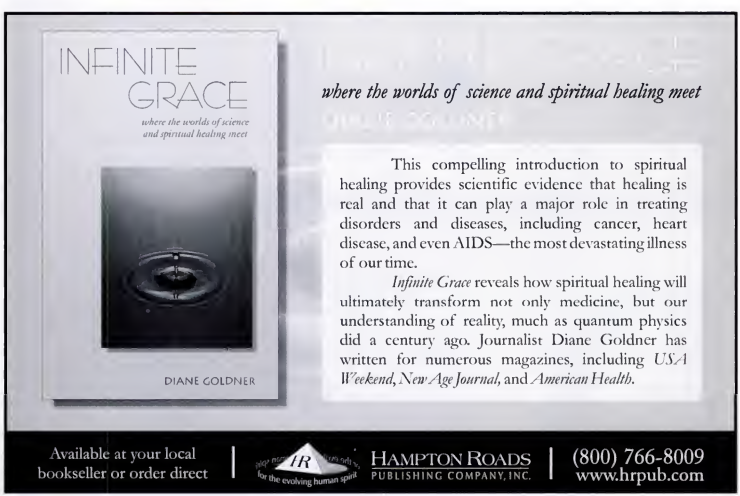

## SOUL & SPIRIT

**SOUL WORK** *by Anne & Charles Simpkinson (HarperPerennial).* From the people behind *Common Boundary* magazine comes this "field guide for spiritual seekers." Short essays by Caroline Myss, Marion Woodman, Thomas Moore, Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Jack Kornfield, and many others define the territory at the boundary of psyche and soul. Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, and Jewish paths, body-centered practices, shamanism, and various psychotherapies are discussed. Extensive resource sections at the end of each chapter list seminars, contacts, training programs, and publications. This exhaustively researched encyclopedia will tell you who's who and what's happening in healing professions and communities across the country.

**THE POWER OF PERSONAL STORYTELLING** *by Jack Maguire (Tarcher/Putnam).* Everyone loves to hear a good story. Jack Maguire is a professional storyteller who teaches us how to become storytellers ourselves. Even if you think you can never remember details or are too shy to hold the floor, he shows, in step-by-step exercises, how to recount tales of your life and the lives of others in order to strengthen your courage and confidence, make your life memorable, and share your spirit with others. Through storytelling, he claims, "We revitalize our sense of the miraculous."




**YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT TO DO** *by Sharon Franquemont (Tarcher/Putnam).* "Sell your cleverness and buy bewilder-

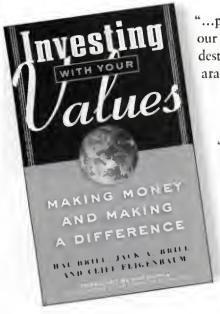


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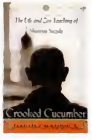
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ment," said Rumi. "Cleverness is mere opinion. Bewilderment is intuition." Sharon Franquemont has written a friendly, fun guide to trusting bewilderment and finding direction in it. Beginning with making a vow to follow our soul's purpose, we learn how to open to the intuitive body, cultivate silence, nurture joy and laughter, enter nonlinear time, and expand our limited sense of space. If you've ever been confused about what to do next, wondering where you'll get the answer, this book will lead you to the best source of guidance in your life—your own wisdom.

**CROOKED CUCUMBER** *by David Chadwick (Broadway).* "Buddhism is not any special teaching. It's our human way." Thus Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, the most influential Zen master to come to the West, described the path he brought from Japan. He lived this extraordinary ordinariness in each moment of his life. In this first-ever biography, beginning with his childhood and ending with his death in 1971, we hear the voices of students, friends, and family members as well as Roshi's own words. His tender, funny, and strong presence imbues the book as if he is still here with us: "Moment after moment, completely devote yourself to listening to your inner voice."




**WARM SMILES FROM COLD MOUNTAINS** *by Reb Anderson (Rodmell Press).* Reb Anderson was ordained as a Zen priest by Shunryu Suzuki and now lives and teaches in California. These collected dharma talks were given during practice sessions, and they carry the scent of incense and the spaciousness of a zendo. The dignity and incisiveness of Suzuki Roshi echoes in the voice of his student: "By sitting still in each moment of your life and becoming just yourself, you may finally realize that you are not yourself at all, but that in reality you are so deeply connected with others and so completely supported by others



that, in fact, you are nothing other than all living beings."

**WORK AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE** *by Lewis Richmond (Broadway).* This profound book is based on the premise that the details of our workdays contain gifts for the spirit. As an ordained Zen Buddhist and a business executive, Richmond might appear to be straddling two opposing worlds. But in this book, he shows us what Buddhism and business have to teach each other. He suggests ways we can use the workplace as a place for spiritual growth through attention to body, breath, pace, and surroundings. "Your employer may dictate every aspect of your work life, but no matter what kind of job you do, you are the boss of your inner life," he tells us. Ultimately, we see that we can turn even workaday irritations into opportunities for entering into the heart of life.




**SACRED WORLD** *by Jeremy and Karen Hayward (Shambhala).* As taught by the late Tibetan teacher Chogyam Trungpa, the path of the "Shambhala warrior" combines Buddhist mindfulness practice with pre-Buddhist shamanic teachings. The Haywards, close students of Trungpa, present the heart of this path, which begins with the inherent basic goodness of humans as the ground for cultivating fearlessness, trust, and genuineness. Instructions are given for "raising windhorse" (entering into the field of fierce energy in which we live) and inviting *dralas* (patterns of living energy) into our lives. The Shambhala path brings together teachings from many ancient traditions into simple yet far-reaching practices.




**A FIELD GUIDE TO THE SOUL** *by James Thornton (Bell Tower).* Am I willing to let go of suffering? James Thornton suggests we ask ourselves this question as we move across the threshold for a voyage into the contours of our inner landscape.




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*Paramahansa Yogananda, second from right, with other delegates of the International Congress of Religious Liberals, just after his maiden voyage to the United States.— Boston, Massachusetts, October, 1920

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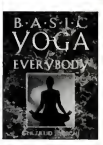
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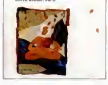
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**MEDITATION MADE EASY** *by Lorin Roche (HarperSanFrancisco).* What Lorin Roche means by meditation is a kind of focused attention—a natural tendency to pause and focus on a moment of experience. He suggests many ways to get started doing it intentionally, including following the breath, listening to quiet sounds, and tracking the movement of thoughts. This is meditation without a guru or even a particular spiritual path, although the techniques are gathered from many different traditions. Whatever your reasons for wanting to meditate, this is a handy and friendly place to begin. Roche knows what he is talking about and is a worthy guide.




## PILGRIMAGE

**PATH WITHOUT DESTINATION** *by Satish Kumar (Eagle Brook).* Satish Kumar left his home in India at age 9 to join a brotherhood of wandering Jain monks. Later, inspired by Gandhi's vision, he undertook an 8,000-mile peace walk from India to America, without money or possessions. He finally settled in England, where he cofounded, with E.F. Schumacher, the "small is beautiful" movement. He is now editor of *Resurgence* magazine, a British journal dedicated to ecological awareness and human community. This is the spiritual autobiography of a man whose whole life has

been a pilgrimage. "Whenever I have kept flowing, I have found my natural state of being, beyond the chains of mental abstractions. At those times I have felt like water: no specific color, no particular taste, no solid structure, but natural and fluid. Sometimes water stagnates, but this is overcome when its natural state of motion is resumed; water finds again its own true nature."




**THE ART OF PILGRIMAGE** *by Phil Cousineau (Conari Press).* If you're longing for a meaningful journey, make a point of checking out this book by lifelong traveler Phil Cousineau, who sings with the Eskimos, "Glorious it is when wandering is come." The book is filled with old and new tales of the ancient art of spiritual travel from all over the world configured as a classic hero's journey: the call, departure, labyrinth, arrival, and "bringing back the boon." There is also a plethora of interesting observations, like the following: "There is something quite satisfying about taking off your shoes and socks and feeling the earth under your feet when you are in a strange land."




## PARENTING

**PARENT AS MYSTIC, MYSTIC AS PARENT** *by David Spangler (Riverhead).* This is not a how-to book, but a few parenting tips are included: "Step One: Sit down and make a lap." It is in this spirit that David Spangler approaches parenting; the caring and love represented by the lap is our connection to our children and to the sacred. He finds many threads common to the mystical and parental life, such as the need to listen, seeing the world as our family, having faith in the invisible or unknown, taking responsibility for our choices, making a safe place to ex-





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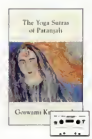
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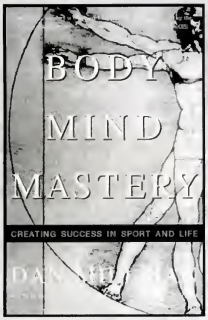



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**THE WHOLE PARENTING GUIDE** *by Alan Reder, Phil Catalfo, and Stephanie Renfrow Hamilton (Broadway).* In contrast to Spangler's more reflective approach, this volume is crammed with practical advice for parents who want to raise happy kids and contribute to a healthier, saner world. There is good advice on pregnancy, breast feeding, family values, health care, nutrition, choosing a school, sports, creativity, social action, environmental awareness, and creating a home for the spirit. Thorough resource sections end each chapter. Practical pointers are interwoven with lively anecdotes from real families. The authors have done their homework. This is the owner's manual that should come with every new baby.




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**THE FACES OF BUDDHISM IN AMERICA** *edited by Charles Prebish and Kenneth Tanaka (California).*

*Holly Hammond is a freelance writer in Berkeley, California.*

# Independent Booksellers: An Endangered Species

By Derk Richardson

The next time you decide to shop for a new book about yoga, meditation, or alternative medicine, where will you start? Will you get in the car and drive to one of the two superstores—Barnes & Noble or Borders Books & Music—that accounted for nearly $5 billion in book sales last year? Or, like the 1 million people who tried it for the first time during the 1998 holiday gift-buying season, will you log on to the World Wide Web and place your order at Amazon.com, which brought in an estimated $250 million in the last three months of the year?

Maybe you'd prefer to spend your money at a locally owned independent bookstore. Perhaps you know one that specializes in your areas of interest, a place that occasionally offers readings by some of your favorite authors, and provides personalized service from the owner and knowledgeable clerks, a place that feels like an integral part of your community, and doesn't assault you just inside the front door with tables full of deeply discounted new titles from the *New York Times* bestseller list.

The bad news is that such havens constitute an endangered species. You already know this if you are like the patrons of the 12-year-old GAIA Bookstore in Berkeley, California, or the 20-year-old Printer's Inc. across the bay in Palo Alto, who have seen their beloved local institutions pushed to the brink of economic ruin by the encroachment of the chain stores, and tipped over the edge by the advent of on-line retail. Last winter, both of those bookstores announced their imminent demise.

Since 1987, GAIA has served a specialized clientele by stocking books about spirituality, ecology, feminism, psychology, and the arts. The bookstore has also hosted more than 250 author readings annually. But in 1998, GAIA suffered a $175,000 decline in sales, and holiday business dropped 25 percent. In the newsletter that announced a February 14 closure date, owners Patrice Wynne and Eric Joost decried "the damaging effects of Wall Street-financed corporate chain bookstores and Internet bookselling," and declared, "As a small business with modest capital resources, we have not been able to sustain the loss of business incurred by catastrophic changes in the book industry. Corporate interests now greatly influence our decisions about where to buy our books and what books we are reading."

In the Printer's Inc. Web site announcement of their general-interest store's closure, owners Gerry Masteller and Susan MacDonald cited increasing rents, a deteriorating retail environment in the immediate neighborhood, and, above all, the dramatic upsurge of Internet book sales. "We cannot exaggerate



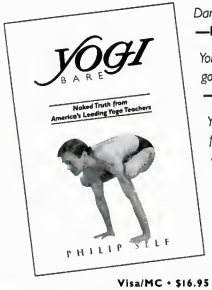
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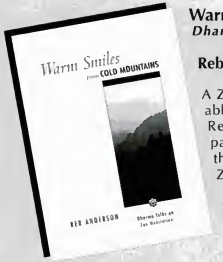
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the potential impact for the consumer if on-line sites such as Amazon draw so much revenue away from independently owned community-based bookstores that they cannot survive," they wrote.

Many independent booksellers see their plight as a byproduct of unprecedented consolidation sweeping through the publishing industry. They feel squeezed by the spread of superstores and Costco/Price Club-type discount warehouses. Some are wary of the "vertical integration" of the business, represented by retailer Barnes & Noble's pending purchase of the Ingram Book Group distributor, and Amazon's rumored interest in acquiring one of Ingram's rivals, Baker & Taylor.

Monopolies, mergers, and "vertical integration" may be endemic in American life these days, from banks to record companies and radio stations, but these phenomena are relatively new in the book world. "The book industry was left alone for years because it was not a high-profit industry," says Philip Barry, owner of Shambhala Booksellers, a cozy Berkeley shop that has been specializing in books about spirituality and metaphysics since 1968. "But now corporate interests are trying to make it one."

Ironically, Barry notes, many people assume that stores such as his, catering to niche readerships, should be somewhat insulated from the insidious pressures of the general marketplace. Not so, he explains. In 1987, Shambhala (predating and wholly separate from Shambhala Publications) had a staff of 13. Now Barry is the only full-time employee. The shop has operated at a loss for the past two years. "We have been on a gradual decline ever since the 'New Age' boom hit the mainstream in 1987," he says. "After Shirley MacLaine's book was made into a TV movie, all the chains started stocking spiritual titles. Then it kept happening in waves. Joseph Campbell's books had always sold steadily here, then he went on TV with Bill Moyers and our sales dropped significantly. Every time something like that hits, we lose ground. We are a store that allows people to go further into a subject or a practice and really run with it. But when it comes to the big titles, people no longer think they have to come here to get them. Costco was selling *The*

*Celestine Prophecy* by the pallet at cost."

The indies will not go down without a fight, however. Late last year, a group of more than 20 individual bookstores filed suit in U.S. District Court against Barnes & Noble and Borders, alleging that the two chains have "engaged in a pattern and practice of soliciting, inducing, and receiving secret, discriminatory, and illegal terms from publishers and distributors," that their "market saturation strategies are being fueled in significant part by secret and illegal terms," and that their continued growth "can only be profitable if the chains receive illegal deals and existing independent booksellers are driven out of the marketplace." That is only one of the lawsuits and petitions that have been instigated in recent years against the rampant chain store expansion and mega-mergers.

**We cannot exaggerate the potential impact for the consumer if on-line sites such as Amazon draw so much revenue away from independently owned community-based bookstores that they cannot survive.**

—Gerry Masteller and Susan MacDonald of Printer's Inc. in Palo Alto, California

On a more grassroots level, individual stores are scrambling to keep afloat. They face the challenge of remaining competitive when chains and the Internet have set the criteria for competition—discounts, vast selections, and delivery on demand. "The answer is different for everyone," says Brian Rood, who operates Avenue Books in another Berkeley


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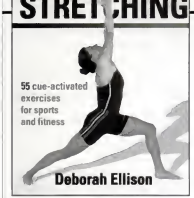
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neighborhood. "Survival strategies are going to vary as much as the bookstores do. The crux of the matter is that service is the only thing we have to offer. Would you as a customer rather wander through a 10,000-square-foot store, trying to find a book, or have someone walk you over to the shelf and tell you about the books and the authors? Moreover, what most people don't realize is that when you consider the entire inventory, my discounts are better than Barnes & Noble's." When Rood, by questioning his local UPS driver, discovered that more than 100 Amazon purchases were being delivered each week in the neighborhood where his "core constituency" lives, he started up his own Web site where customers can browse the inventory, read staff recommendations, and place orders. "If they find it more convenient to buy on-line," he says, "then I want to make it easier for them to remain my customers."

David Bolduc, owner of Boulder Book Store in Boulder, Colorado, argues that independent bookstores, indeed small businesses in general, need to go beyond ordinary good business practices in order to survive. "You need to engage your local community in a discussion of what defines that community and what is valuable in that community," he says. Established in 1973, Boulder Book Store has grown over the years from a 1,000-square-foot storefront to a four-story, 20,000-square-foot operation with 50 employees. It has withstood the encroachment of a Barnes & Noble just a mile and a half away. "I wouldn't say we're thriving," Bolduc says, "but we're still in business, and we're not operating at a loss."

A year or so ago, Bolduc was instrumental in establishing the Boulder Independent Business Alliance. "Our mission is largely educational," he says. "To consumers, we pose the question, does it matter that you have locally owned independent businesses in your community? And to businesses, what is your relationship to the community?" Boulder Book Store recently instituted a "Shares" program, modeled after a similar program pioneered by Schwartz Bookstores in Milwaukee. Under the plan, customers choose a local nonprofit organization from a list of participants;

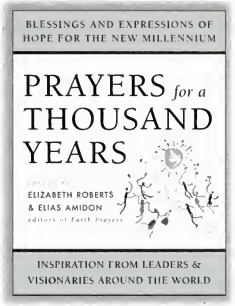
the store then donates 1 percent of every purchase the customer makes to the designated group. "That kind of linking helps people appreciate independent businesses as threads in the fabric of community," says Bolduc.

At GAIA, which has always considered itself as much a "cultural center" as a bookstore, Wynne and Joost have held "wisdom circles" and town hall meetings to rally the faithful and garner customer input. Two days after GAIA announced that it would have to close, on Christmas Eve, an anonymous donor offered a $200,000 gift if other customers would match that amount with their contributions. The community's response to this news was generous, and Wynne and Joost were optimistic at press time that they would be able to keep the bookstore open until they restructure as the GAIA Cultural Center in a new facility opening next year in downtown Berkeley. "These are critical times," Wynne says, "and they call for radical new actions. The old models of for-profit and even nonprofit businesses have to be reconsidered."

At stake may be more than just the way we buy books. Shambhala's Barry calls it the "village mentality, the ability and the will to think locally, act locally, and shop locally." Ivan Linscott, a longtime patron of Printer's Inc., expresses it from the customer's point of view. "For a long time, I've been pleased that I could make my home in a place where a store like Printer's Inc. flourished," he says. "I was shocked and dismayed by the news that Printer's Inc. in Palo Alto would close. The implications of this loss on the soul of Palo Alto continue to trouble me. I would like to think that a fast-paced, technology-driven, and education-rich community would cherish its independent businesses as cultural signposts that define and give meaning to their lives. Maybe we're trying too hard to hold onto the past, and a small bookstore with a cafe may be better suited to the town of Palo Alto of a hundred years ago. But I think not. We need to find a way to keep it with us as we surf into the new millennium." ◆

*Contributing editor Derk Richardson buys his books from independent booksellers.*

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# Supta Padangusthasana

## *Reclining Big Toe Pose with Variations*

*Learning to move like a starfish can enliven all your asanas.*

**By Donna Farhi**

Although in the West we've come to use the word "pose" as a synonym for "asana," a yoga asana is not simply a pose. A pose is a static copy of something other than ourselves, but an asana is a movement that arises within us. While an asana may seem static to a casual observer, it is not a fixed position at all. Rather, the form of each asana acts as a container for subtle yet dynamic inner movement. For a dancer or athlete, internal impulses result in movement through space; for a yogi, these impulses move instead along internal lines of force, reverberating within and constantly renewing the container of the asana. When we witness a yoga practitioner skilled in this dynamic internal dance, we sense a body in continuous, subtle motion. Too often, students interpret and practice "asana" as "rigid stance," perhaps because our images of asanas come from photographs, or because some instructors teach asanas as static sculptures. But if we rely on such guides, we may strive to obtain the external appearance of an asana without ever gaining the true internal experience of it.

To experience the true fruits of hatha yoga practice, we can't simply copy old forms, mechanically mimicking traditional positions. The original yogis explored, experimented, and invented new ways to move and be in the body, and we must practice in their spirit—sensing, feeling, and acting from our own internal motivations—if we're to actively participate in the continuation and evolution of yoga.

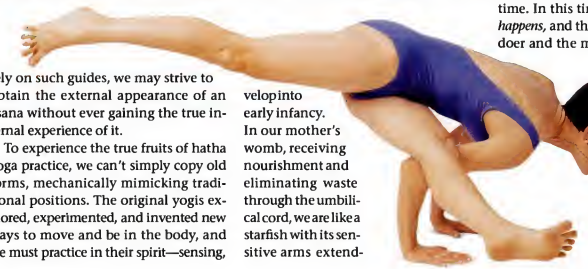
In our modern world, we have many new tools to help us rediscover and extend the path of the original yogis. My own yoga explorations have been especially illuminated by the work of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, director of the School for Body-Mind Centering in Amherst, Massachusetts. Her theories about the way in which human movement patterns arise, from conception through to adulthood, can provide modern day practitioners of yoga with a road map for reconnecting with the internal world that makes an asana an organic, living experience rather than just an imitative, static pose. (For more information about Body-Mind Centering and yoga, see articles in Sept/Oct 1993 and Nov/Dec 1998 *Yoga Journal*.)

One important movement pattern described by Bainbridge Cohen, navel radiation, begins in utero and continues to develop into early infancy. In our mother's womb, receiving nourishment and eliminating waste through the umbilical cord, we are like a starfish with its sensitive arms extending from and feeding back into its central mouth. Like a starfish, we initiate movement from our center, moving from our core out into our six limbs: two arms, two legs, head, and tail *(Figure 1)*. These limbs become fluid projections of our core, their relationships to each other organized around the center of the body at the navel.

We may initiate activity from the navel toward the head, the tail, or both simultaneously. We may initiate movement from the navel to one hip, into a leg, or from one arm to the opposite leg, moving through our center in a diagonal line.

In navel radiation, movement always flows in waves from the center to the periphery and back again, amplifying an earlier developmental movement pattern—the expanding/condensing motion of the breath.

Most adults who consciously engage the movement pattern of navel radiation find its fluid ease wonderfully sensual and pleasurable. Many people find that as they release into the infinite possibilities of the pattern, they lose all track of time. In this timeless place, movement *happens*, and the separation between the doer and the movement ceases. By exploring navel radiation, we can discover that we do not need to will ourselves into action—our breath and inner impulses will move us, if we simply allow ourselves to be moved.



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# Supta Padangusthasana





**2** **Adho Mukha Savasana.** Practicing Corpse Pose face down, with the whole body supported by the ground, activates the functions of the internal organs and facilitates connecting with internal sensation. (If you have a tight neck, you can benefit from using a bolster, as shown here.)

**1** **The Human Starfish.** Navel radiation provides an energetic template for proper alignment between the core of the body and the limbs. In navel radiation, your actions initiate from your belly—moving out through your head, tail, arms, and legs, or drawing your limbs back toward center.



## Benefits

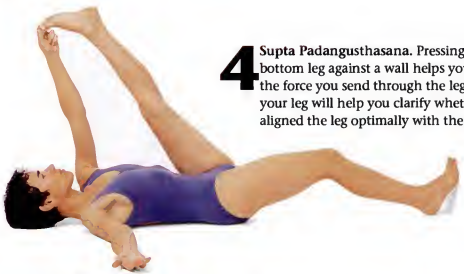
- Lengthens and releases hamstrings and lower back.
- Relaxes and calms nervous system.
- Twisting variations stimulate spinal column and organs of elimination.
- Twisting variations also release deep external rotator muscles of the hip (essential for athletes and often helpful for persons with sciatica).



**5** **Parivrtta Supta Padangusthasana.** Find the support of navel radiation in the posture, searching for the inner alignment that allows you to feel each limb in intimate, fluid connection to your center. When you practice this way, you will feel the posture as an expression of your whole body rather than as a collection of separate parts.



**3** **Condensed Navel Radiation.** Explore folding and unfolding your body around the initiating action of the navel center. Notice how coiling the body sets up the conditions for uncoiling back out.



**4** **Supta Padangusthasana.** Pressing the foot of the bottom leg against a wall helps you feel and amplify the force you send through the leg. The grounding of your leg will help you clarify whether you have aligned the leg optimally with the rest of the body.



**6** **Eka Pada Koundinyasana.** (For advanced students.) As you descend from Tripod Headstand, draw your legs into and twist from the belly. Then, as your bottom leg reaches your arm, simultaneously open all your limbs out from your center. Note how this posture is merely Parivrtta Supta Padangusthasana in a different relationship to gravity.

PHOTOGRAPHER: BILL REITZEL; MODEL: DONNA FARHI

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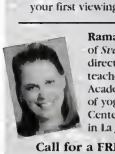
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*continued*

### Exploring Navel Radiation

To begin to explore navel radiation in your yoga practice, lie on your belly on a soft surface, allowing your head to turn to one side and your limbs to rest in any configuration you find comfortable. If turning your head is awkward, support your torso from the top of the breastbone to your pubic bone with a bolster, pillow, or stack of folded blankets so that your chest is elevated and your head rests lightly on the ground (*Figure 2*). Allow yourself to release your weight into the earth, feeling the tremendous comfort and ease of embracing the ground with your soft front body. Take some time to let yourself settle into the earth and to feel a connection with your breathing. Most important, resist the temptation to direct your movements.

As your breath alternately expands and condenses your body, feel how the belly acts as the central mover. With your attention on your center, notice the impulses that begin there, and track these impulses as they travel through you. You may feel a wave moving from deep in your belly down into your tail, or up your spine into your head. You might notice an impulse from your navel traveling into one hip and leg, or into a shoulder and arm. As you feel these impulses, *coparticipate* with the movement: Rather than directing your movement by *thinking* about it, open yourself to *feeling* the impulses and allowing them to amplify into movement.

Imagine yourself as a human starfish, with your center of Intelligence at the level of your navel, and your sensitive limbs radiating out from there. Begin to explore this image, first expanding your limbs away from the belly (either individually or in combination), then condensing (feeding your limbs back into the belly). As you expand and condense, allow your belly to initiate the movement, as if your limbs were attached to your center by invisible energetic strings that wind and unwind from your core. Don't have any preconceived ideas about where your movements may take you: Everyone has their own style of moving in navel radi-

ation, just as everyone walks a little differently. One possible expression of navel radiation is to curl up like a fetus, limbs coiled in toward your center *(Figure 3)*. In navel radiation, coiling inward always sets up the potential for releasing and uncoiling into an opening movement. As you play with the possibilities, feel free to roll onto your back or side, and to change levels (coming up to sit or stand).

### Supta Padangusthasana

Every asana needs the support of navel radiation at its foundation. This pattern organizes the body as an organic, harmonious whole, rather than a collection of disparate parts. Unfortunately, we can easily get so caught up in the details of an asana that we lose track of the matrix which holds those details together so beautifully. Sometimes we get overwhelmed when a teacher deluges us with separate instructions for each part of the body; sometimes we focus too single-mindedly on particular actions within an asana. Often, we deaden our internal impulses by rigidly trying to hold the outer form of a yoga pose.

To avoid these pitfalls and maintain contact with the integrating power of navel radiation, let's try coming into Supta Padangusthasana in an unusual way. Start by lying on your back and curling yourself up like a bug *(Figure 3)*. Allow all your limbs to feed back towards your center. Then begin to unwind, allowing your limbs to extend in whatever direction feels pleasurable. After a few minutes of folding and unfolding, begin imagining the form of Supta Padangusthasana: one leg extended along the floor and one leg extended in the air. The next time you unwind, find the connection from your core to your six limbs, extending from your center to your head, your tail, your arms, and both legs. Don't hold the pose, but continue to alternate between folding all the limbs in and extending them out. Experiment with the placement of both the leg on the floor and the leg in the air, and also with the placement of your torso relative to your legs. Each time you extend out, attempt to find the most harmonious relationship possible between your limbs and your core.

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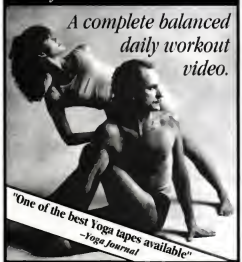


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to find a harmonious relationship between all the parts of the body, they usually find an exceedingly good alignment—even if I haven't given any specific alignment instructions. Because each body's structure and proportions are unique, good alignment is necessarily relative. To find harmony, we can't just imitate an ideal form; instead, we must learn how our individual body works and what it is able to do at this particular moment. Seeking harmony within an asana doesn't mean avoiding challenges. We may need to stretch in ways that feel uncomfortable to open and release restrictions in our bodies. But using harmony as a touchstone can help prevent us from ignoring the pains that warn us of potential injury.

In contrast, when we're asked to go as far into an asana as we can, or to mimic an ideal form, we tend to forsake harmony to pursue our idea of perfection. Our concepts about the body can become so precious to us that it becomes difficult to hear what the body is actually saying. We may even injure ourselves in the service of these ideas.

To assist yourself in discovering a harmonious, integrated relationship between all the parts of your body in Supta Padangusthasana, place yourself so that the foot of your bottom leg touches the wall while that leg's knee is still bent *(Figure 4)*. This time, as you unfurl from your fetal position, press the sole of the foot against the wall. If you have a harmonious connection between your limbs and your trunk, pushing against the wall will send a rebounding impulse up through the leg, into the trunk, and along the spine to the crown of the head. By pressing and releasing your foot against the wall, you can determine if that impulse can move clearly from your leg through your center. When this happens, the force moves strongly through your bones like a train running over well-aligned tracks. When the tracks of your bones are out of alignment, the train of force moving through you can be slowed down, pushed to one side, or stopped altogether.

Experiment with pressing and releasing your foot against the wall until you

find the clearest connection between the heel of the foot and the sitting bone on that side. Once you feel the rebounding impulse traveling up your leg and into your pelvis, check that the impulse is allowed to travel into your belly and spine. If the pelvis is overarched, with a big gap between the floor and the lumbar spine, you'll find that the impulse stops there and goes no farther up your back. Alternately, if you try to flatten your lumbar spine onto the floor, removing the gentle, natural curve, you will also prevent the impulse from your leg from traveling through your core. Continue exploring in this way until you feel a strong connection between your extended leg and your torso, a sense of integration that continues all the way up to the crown of your head.

Now proceed into the classical pose. Start with the left leg extended along the floor and the sole of the foot in contact with the wall. Bend the right knee and draw the leg in towards the chest. Depending on your flexibility, either grasp the big toe with your index and third finger or place a strap around the sole of the foot. As you straighten the leg towards the sky, imagine yourself again as a human starfish, concentrating on keeping open the connections between your core and your limbs. Draw the right leg as close to the chest as you can without losing this sense of connection. Sustain your awareness in this position for a minute or more, and then rest. Before proceeding to the second side, return to the fetal position, and again alternate between expanding outward from your center and condensing back inward, so that you renew your awareness of navel radiation.

### Parivrtta Supta Padangusthasana

This is one of my all-time-favorite yoga explorations. Not only does this inquiry feel terrific, it also gives you all the information your body needs to do more advanced variations of Padangusthasana.

Start by lying in a fetal position on your left side, with the sole of your left foot a few feet away from a wall. Relax back into the curvature of your spine. As you rest in this position, visualize the variation of Supta Padangusthasana where the right leg crosses the midline, creating a full-body spiral *(Figure 5)*. Then


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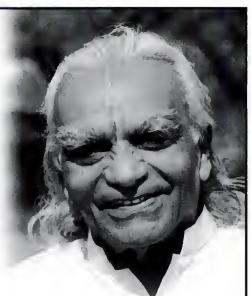
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slowly begin to unfurl into this position, just as if you were enjoying an early-morning stretch in bed. Allow the movement to blossom from your core, with all your limbs simultaneously arriving at their full extension. Alternate three or four times between folding in and opening out, each time exploring where the limbs need to be to maintain the clearest, most harmonious connection to your trunk. With each successive exploration, you can again use the pressure of the foot against the wall to get feedback and clarify your alignment. Keep in mind that the version of the asana shown in Figure 5 is only one possible representation. Though all of our bodies are similar, each of us is also unique, and our asanas should honor this.

Once you've found a configuration that feels harmonious, sustain the life of the asana by allowing the body, breath by breath, to release more fully into the movement. Rather than holding the pose rigidly, allow it to change. If you are truly attending to the movements that ripple through you with each breath, you'll notice an oscillation in every part of your body. For example, a moment of strong extension of your lower leg will be followed by a moment of slight release and retraction. While you *should* extend your limbs strongly, don't be so forceful that you prevent this natural oscillation. The breath has a lot to teach you, so listen!

Before you do the asana on the second side, again lie on your back in a fetal position, expanding out and condensing in a few more times. Don't assume this second side will be the same as the first; you may have to place your limbs very differently in order to find a harmonious position.

### Eka Pada Koundinyasana

*This section discusses advanced asanas, and is for those who have sustained a practice over many years and who are already familiar with the asanas mentioned. Rather than presenting a complete "how-to" for these asanas, I will simply suggest ways you can apply the principles studied earlier in the column to such advanced work.*

Once you sense how navel radiation provides the underlying integration for the twisted variation of Supta Padangusthasana, you can apply your understanding in asanas such as Parivrttaikapada Sirsasana and Eka Pada Koundinyasana *(Figure 5)*. In fact, both asanas are merely inverted variations of the reclining pose. The added demands of being upside down make engaging the movement pattern of naval radiation even more crucial. When you're coming into Eka Pada Koundinyasana from Sirsasana II, for example, experiment with condensing the legs back towards the navel as you descend, turning the belly at the same time. Then, as you extend your legs, allow all your limbs to radiate out like the limbs of a starfish, with the head, tail, arms, and legs reaching their full extensions simultaneously. If you extend your limbs separately, you will have to adjust and find a new balance each time you bring a limb into place.

### Your Body Is Wise

Whether you are learning the more basic asanas or practicing complex variations, the underlying principles that govern your movements are the same. As you turn your focus to the supporting matrix of these principles, you may find that many of the details which you previously commanded *onto* the body now arise spontaneously and joyously *from* the body. When we drop all our concepts about what we think we know, we find that the information our bodies provide us is greater than the sum of our often self-limiting ideas. If we listen intently to this guiding intelligence, our practice of asana becomes alive and vital, transforming poses into living, breathing creations. ◆

*Donna Farhi is a registered movement therapist and international yoga teacher. She is the author of* The Breathing Book *(Henry Holt, 1996), and is currently at work on a yoga book to be released by Henry Holt in 2000.*

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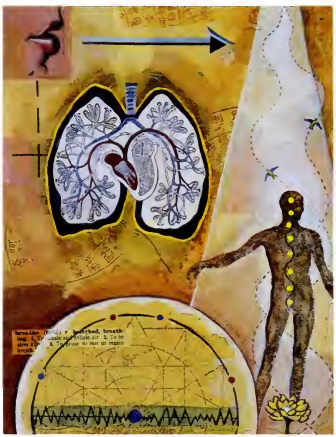
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# Breathing Lessons

*By making it a conscious, controlled action, pranayama begins to transform breathing into a spiritual practice.*

**By Judith Lasater**



As a child I used to play a game in the backyard with friends. We would hyperventilate and then hold our breath until we almost passed out. We thought this was great fun. Little did we realize that we were playing with one of the most powerful physiological and spiritual tools at our disposal: the breath.

We usually take the ability to draw a simple breath for granted, but our everyday language reveals our intuitive awareness that breathing is powerful and critically important. We often talk about "breathing easy" to show we've relaxed and let go of a problem or worry. We use the term "breathing room" when we need more space for sufficient air and thus life itself. And we express our intuitive understanding of the power of breath when we advise angry people to "Take 10 deep breaths" before they speak or act from anger. Actually, this bit of folk wisdom has a basis in fact. A period of quiet deep breathing causes blood pressure to drop and to stay down for as long as 30 minutes according to the *Journal of the American Geriatric Society*.

The power of breathing cannot be denied. Breathing is at the center of natural childbirth training, and we are taught to breathe deeply before we face stressful situations like auditions or exams. Breathing is at the heart of virtually every meditation system, as well as most styles of asana (posture) practice. This is because when we pay attention to the breath, it brings us fully into the present. It is impossible to focus on the breath without paying attention to the here and now.

Yoga has always stressed the importance of observing and regulating the breath. The most ancient sourcebook for yoga practice, the *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali, includes such practices—called *pranayama*—as one of the eight essential limbs of yoga. In Sanskrit, "prana" means not just breath but also the life energy that fills the universe, and "yama" means restraint or control. Pranayama makes use of the respiratory apparatus, but the focus of pranayama isn't simply on inhalation and exhalation. Rather, yogis use the breath to draw in, channel, and store universal life energy so that it can be used to facilitate self-evolution.

While Patanjali doesn't instruct the reader in specific pranayama techniques, he unquestionably includes pranayama as a very important tool for self-transformation. In fact, he claims in chapter I, verse 34 that the goal of yoga—"the resolution of the agitations of consciousness"—can be achieved by the controlled "expulsion and retention of the breath."

However, one of Patanjali's few direct comments on pranayama sometimes confuses yoga students. In chapter II, verse 49, Patanjali states that pranayama is to be practiced when asana has been perfected. What could this mean? Most of us react negatively when we hear the word "perfected." As yoga students, we learn early on that there is no such thing as perfection: Each pose is new every day, and each day every pose can teach something new.

To better understand Patanjali, we need to consider what he meant by asana and perfection. The word "asana" means "seat" as well as posture, and in chapter II, verse 46, Patanjali says that asana should be both "steady and comfortable." In other words, when Patanjali directs us to perfect asana before practicing pranayama, I interpret his teaching

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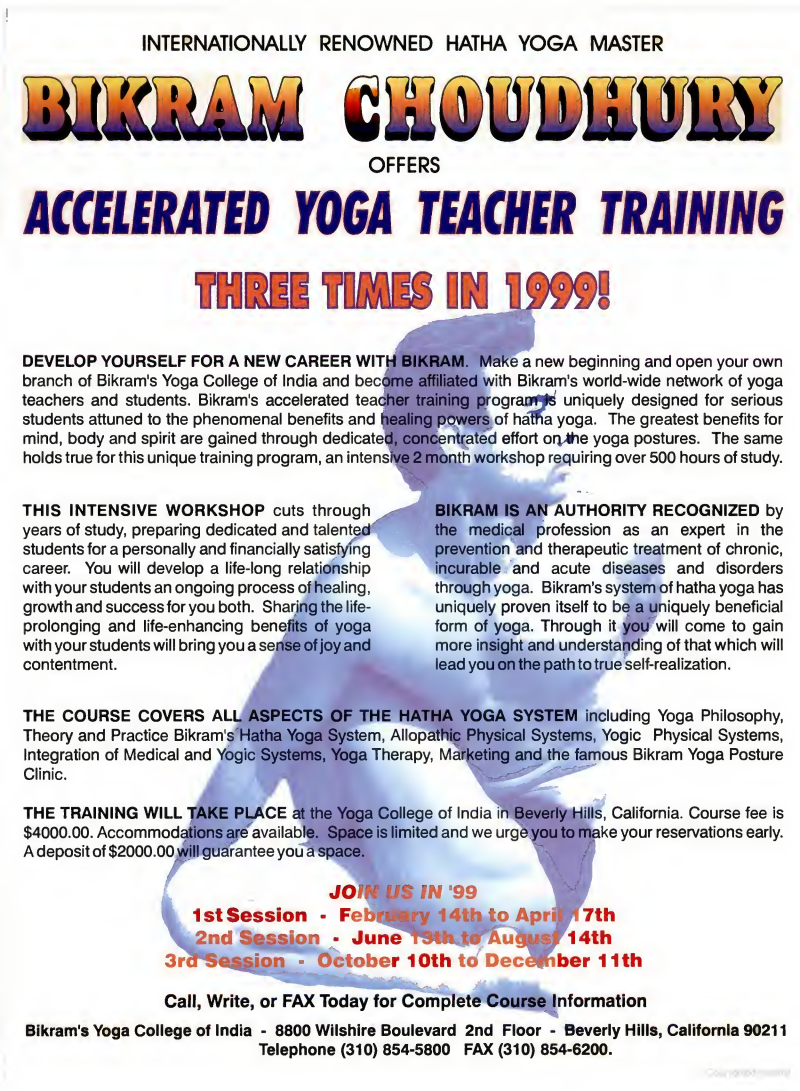
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to be that we should be able to remain steady and comfortable in a seated meditation posture like Padmasana (Lotus Pose). Because maintaining a stable seated pose can be such a difficult task, I teach students to do pranayama lying down for the first year or two. This allows them to be steady and comfortable and not become distracted by struggling to keep the chest open and spine long in a seated pose.

### The Physiology of Breathing

To understand why breathing practices can be so transformative, it helps to know a little bit about the physiology of the breath. Even though we take it for granted as a simple part of life, breathing is a complicated process that involves three distinct stages. The first stage moves oxygen into the body, across the membranes of the lungs, and into the bloodstream. At the same time that oxygen passes from the alveolar sacs of the lungs into the bloodstream, carbon dioxide, a waste product of metabolic processes, moves in the opposite direction and is expelled from the body by exhalation. This first stage, called external respiration, is what we normally refer to as breathing.

The red blood cells bear fresh oxygen throughout the circulatory system, preparing the body for the second stage of breathing called internal respiration. In this stage, the life-giving oxygen crosses the membranes from the red blood cells into all the other cells of the body. Once this happens, intracellular respiration occurs as the cells make use of the oxygen for growth, repair, and replication. This use of oxygen in cellular metabolic processes is the final stage of breathing.

### Benefits of Pranayama

For thousands of years, yogis have recognized that pranayama can have profound physiological effects. More recently, modern science has offered its own proof. One study I came across during my physical therapy training focused on the benefits of breathing while lying on your back. When you breathe lying down, blood spreads easily throughout the lung tissue, just as water spreads out when you pour it on the floor. With more surface area available, you are able to use more of the oxygen which enters the lungs, however large or small the amount.

Another study published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* in the 1960s found that yoga-type respiratory training may have elements in common with adaptation to high altitudes. One possible explanation for this training effect is that the practice of breath retention increases the ability to tolerate build-up of carbon dioxide in the body. Interestingly, it is the level of carbon dioxide in the blood, not the level of oxygen, which drives the body's respiratory apparatus. If you can tolerate increased carbon dioxide in your blood, your body will not feel a need to breathe as often, and you can get by on less oxygen.

Of course, the ancient yogis didn't use

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the language of modern physiology to explain the benefits of pranayama. To yogis, pranayama is much more than breathing practice. According to yoga theories, once prana is drawn into the body and properly restrained, it can be directed into subtle energy channels called *nadis*. These nadis course through the body like nerves or acupuncture meridians. These subtle channels are believed to carry our spiritual energy. When you can control the prana in the nadis, it can be directed to arouse kundalini, the form of cosmic energy that lies sleeping at the base of the spine. As kundalini moves up the spine, it activates the spiritual energy centers known as chakras. This whole process is believed to awaken your dormant higher consciousness, a state of deep understanding and wisdom. (I advise students who are interested in practicing pranayama in this subtle and intense way to seek out the advice of an experienced teacher.)

While such a powerful awakening sounds wonderful, I find that my personal pranayama practice helps me more with the mundane matters of slowing down and remembering that I am more than just the tasks I accomplish, the classes I teach, and the articles I write. Of course, I wish my kundalini well on its upward journey, but day by day I simply hope that I can open my heart and allow for the possibility of joy in my contact with each person I meet.

***An exquisitely sensitive barometer which registers our reaction to internal and external events, the breath is a constant background mantra reminding us of our connection to the energy of the universe.***

### Pranayama as Meditation

One of my students once asked me why one would want to manipulate breathing, since it is a completely natural part of the life process. I thought about this for a while and realized that although breathing is natural, for most of us it remains unconscious and uncontrolled.

During pranayama one learns to vary the length of inhalation and exhalation as well as to suspend both, either to retain the inhaled breath or to keep the lungs completely empty. These practices make breathing a conscious and controlled action. By bringing this previously unconscious activity into consciousness, and by focusing our awareness totally on the present moment, pranayama begins to transform breathing into a spiritual practice.

Even though full control of the breath can take years to perfect, to me the perfection of this physical control is not the highest form of pranayama. The highest form is to remain completely aware of the breath, allowing it to come and go, without injecting control into the process.

To see just how difficult it is to be aware of the breath without controlling


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it, try this experiment. Find a quiet time and place, and sit or lie comfortably with the spine long and the chest open. Close your eyes and begin to pay attention to your breath. If you are like most people, as soon as you begin to pay attention to your breath, you will begin to change it. This is the ego in action. The urge to control the breath once we are aware of it is the ego trying to control everything it perceives. Eventually, our goal should be to remain completely aware of and at one with the breath without engaging the ego. Try this practice. It is an eye-opening and humbling experience.

***Yogis use the breath to draw in, channel, and store universal life energy so that it can be used to facilitate self-evolution.***

This ability to remain aware of the breath and yet not control it is at the heart of meditation. Virtually all systems of meditation begin with simple breathing exercises or with a technique to make one aware of the breath. The breath makes a perfect focus for meditation: It is immediate and always there, whether we're waking or sleeping, running or sitting. An exquisitely sensitive barometer which registers our reactions to internal and external events, the breath is a constant background mantra reminding us of our connection to the energy of the universe. ◆

*This article is the fourth in a series exploring the eight-limbed yoga of Patanjali. For articles on the yamas (ethical precepts), niyamas (prescribed practices), and asanas (postures), see* Yoga Journal *Nov/Dec 1998, Jan/Feb 1999, and March/April 1999.*

*Judith Lasater is an internationally known yoga teacher and author of* Relax and Renew: Restful Yoga for Stressful Times (Rodmell Press, 1995), *available from YJ's Book and Tape Source on page 72.*





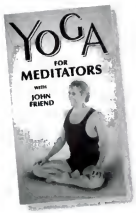


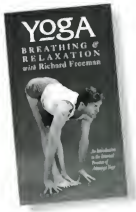

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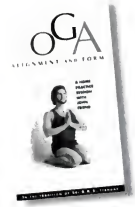
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# Let It Be

*Peace and happiness can be yours if you give up doing, seeking, and wanting, promises spiritual teacher Isaac Shapiro.*

**By Holly Hammond**



"There's nothing to be done. Nothing has to change. We're already home; we're already free." This, an enthusiastic friend tells me, is the revolutionary good news that Isaac Shapiro has brought to town, and tonight I've come to hear more about these ideas which promise to end all spiritual seeking. About 40 of us wait eagerly, perched on hard folding chairs in a dingy Unitarian church hall in Berkeley, California. Shapiro enters, wearing a colorful tropical shirt, and bows to photos of his teacher, H.W.L. Poonja, and his teacher's teacher, Ramana Maharshi. "Namaskar," he says, "Welcome to satsang. Please feel free to speak if you have any questions, any new outbreaks of peace, any overflowings of awakening." He conveys a relaxed confidence that's friendly and open.

A man takes the microphone and asks Shapiro to speak about the sense of "I" that he feels. "We're speaking about the source from which 'I' comes, mind comes," Shapiro replies. "We're bringing attention back to its source, like a river returning to the ocean. The river came from the ocean. There was evaporation, then clouds, rain, river. Once the river returns to the ocean, you can't tell what was the river and what was the ocean. And in fact it never was not ocean."

Next a woman describes how her well-being is marred by chronic feelings of anger. Isaac advises her to let what comes come, without running after it or trying to get rid of it. "It's not you. What do you have to do with it?" Shapiro asks. "None of it is personal." But it's painful, she says, not easy. "You say it's not easy," Shapiro answers, "but in this moment, let whatever is here be here. It's only sensation that's being interpreted. Let it be for a moment without interpreting, not even calling it anger or wanting to get rid of it. Something is here in which all of this is appearing."

Shapiro's quick dispatch of people's pain might seem uncaring but for the cheerful warmth with which he delivers it. And it seems to work. "I've been traveling now for a few years, and people tell me they're suffering," he says. "So every time someone says they're suffering, I say 'Good, let's find the suffering.' And when we look, we can't find it."

Whatever question or dilemma is brought to him, Shapiro soon directs the speaker to something more basic. "Normally we don't pay attention to who is aware. So, this that is aware, when you just bring your mind to that, what happens?" Almost invariably, the person finds spaciousness or stillness beneath any problem. "This is what you are," he then declares. "It is always here. You don't have to do anything for it. Now is there any trouble?" Impossibly simple? Perhaps, but the mood in the room is quietly joyful, permeated by a deep and contagious stillness, and expressions of gratitude abound. I've heard this provocative message before, but this time

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID ORELL

I feel intimations of enormous relief, glimpses of boundless happiness.

Shapiro is one of a number of devotees of the late H.W.L. Poonja who are carrying on his tradition of satsang—a term that refers to a gathering in the presence of a realized teacher. Poonja or Poonjaji, who is also known affectionately as Papaji, found his awakening in the presence of Sri Ramana Maharshi, perhaps the most well known of the Advaita Vedanta teachers. Advaita is a path so minimal that it's hardly a path at all. It holds that the peace and happiness we all seek is already with us as our natural state; it is who we always are. Since it cannot be created and cannot be lost, all attempts to achieve, whether materially or spiritually, only obscure the freedom that is ours. The way of Advaita, therefore, is to realize there is no doer. The method is simply to be silent and observe the presence that underlies all experience.

"The sages advise us to bring our attention to the living God, to that which is living you," Shapiro says. "Try it for an instant. When the mind goes to this or that thought, bring it home." Until recently, this route to awakening was thought to be available to only a few adepts. Conventional wisdom held that most of us need to undergo years of discipline and study to come to this sort of spiritual understanding. But Advaita claims that all discipline, all study, suggests a problem where none exists and thus delays realization. In the West, interest in Advaita's esoteric teachings has mushroomed, and thousands made the pilgrimage to Poonjaji's home in Lucknow, India, before his death in 1997.

Shapiro grew up in South Africa, the son of Jewish parents who had endured life in an Afrikaner society that supported Hitler's Nazism. His first experience of "unconditioned love" came suddenly at age 19, and it changed the direction of his life. He knew he wanted to live within that love, so he left his medical studies and began to re-examine all of his assumptions. The following years brought experiments in communal living, political activism, and time on a kibbutz in Israel.

In 1971 he emigrated to New Zealand to start a rural commune. He got involved


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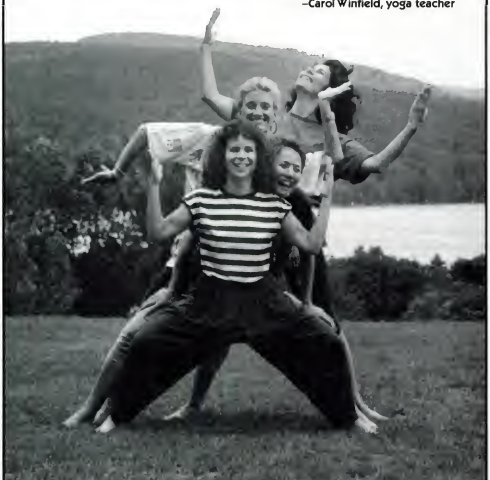
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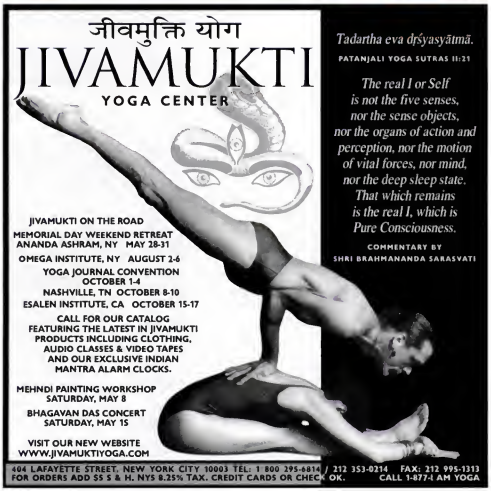


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in "mind clearing" and biofeedback, investigating "the building blocks of the mind"—the structures of decisions, opinions, and beliefs. He began to travel, teaching workshops in how to give attention, having arrived at the conclusion that attention is the key to all experience. Then in the late 1980s he ran into a man who had been to see Poonjaji. He was so impressed with the man's transformation that he went to see for himself what Poonjaji was offering.

***The presence of someone who has realized his or her true nature can spark the fire of realization in others, even without words.***

"There was this old man with a number of people around him," Shapiro recalls. "The scene was completely disorganized, and the people didn't look particularly enlightened or even kind to each other, for that matter. It was not a particularly nice trip. I had been very idealistic. It just didn't match my pictures at all. But I asked him a question, and he looked at me and said 'You have already been to all the heavenly *lokas* [realms]. You've been to visit the hell realms too, I can see. And none of them satisfied you. Therefore you've come to Lucknow to finish your search.' He saw me just like that. He said, 'You've done very well with your figuring out this thing about attention. Now you just have to bring your attention to awareness itself.' It never had occurred to me. So I started to experiment with it." Not that it was easy. First he had to find awareness. "My mind was very technical. I was trying to figure it out. I knew that what he said was correct."

After a short stay in Lucknow, Shapiro had to return to New Zealand to run previously scheduled workshops. Once those commitments were finished, he

rented a house in Lucknow and returned there with his family. Papaji greeted him like a son. "I'd written him letters, and he couldn't even remember who I was. But when I arrived he remembered my face immediately. He took me aside and told everyone to leave the room. Then he said to me, 'You've found the diamond, and I want you to hold satsang.'" Shapiro didn't feel ready. "I knew who I was, but man, there were still a lot of thoughts going on, a lot of dramas, and I certainly didn't feel like the story was finished by any means. I knew what he meant, yes. Intellectually I knew before that these dramas don't matter, but now I actually was starting to experience that they were part of the awakening process. I could see them as opportunities to actually burn through them."

The Advaita tradition of "direct transmission" is the heart of satsang. The presence of someone who has realized his or her true nature can spark the fire of realization in others, even without words. One's focus is directed away from objects toward the subject, the Self. "This is the start of the burning up of all mechanisms of mind," explains Shapiro. "This is my experience since meeting Papaji. And I've seen thousands of people waking up and seeing who they are in this way. I can remember when I first met Papaji. I had all these notions of what I had to give up, what I had to let go of. If that comes in your mind, there's not much you can do about it. But the secret is simply to stay with yourself. What needs to leave will leave, what needs to stay will stay. I would always say 'Papaji, but . . .' and he would say, 'No, no, keep quiet.' I would have said 'but, but, but' till I died. He only had to tell me a few hundred times, and I got it."

Now Shapiro travels six months a year, mainly in Europe, and stays home in Australia for six months, saying the same thing, over and over: Simply be this awareness; to be you is not a practice.

"You only have to come to two satsangs and you have heard everything I have to say," he jokes. It's good to hear these elusive truths again and again, often seemingly for the first time. But many people tell Shapiro they don't listen to


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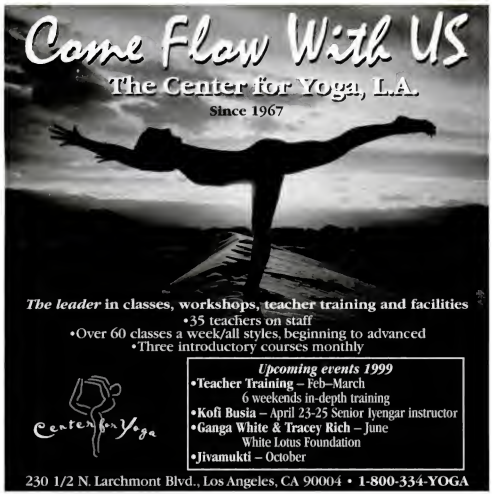
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anything that's said; they just come to enjoy the great pool of being.

Tonight a woman walks to the empty chair he often places beside his own. She wants to know how she can carry the peace of satsang into her work as a teacher of French. "It's a function of interest," Shapiro responds. "If someone wants to learn French, they come to you. If they go someplace where French is not taught, they won't learn much French. So whatever you're interested in, that's where your mind goes. You came here and tasted peace; you fell in love with Mr. Peace. When you're in love, you can't think of anything else."

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"It's hard to think about Mr. Peace when I'm dealing with teenagers," the woman protests.

"If you think of him only one time, it will change everything," Shapiro responds. "First thing in the morning, take a moment for peace. One moment is enough. Your whole day will be different. Then on the way to work take a moment. Then when you go to the bathroom, take a moment to be quiet. Every time you take one moment to be with Mr. Peace, it carries over into the day. Very quickly you'll be kissing Mr. Peace all the time. Papaji always said this: Once you've had one taste of who you are, it's finished, because automatically you'll be drawn back to that beauty." ◆

*Holly Hammond, formerly a senior editor for* Yoga Journal, *is a freelance writer and editor in Berkeley, California.*

**RESOURCES**

For more information about satsang with Isaac Shapiro, contact Deva Stadler, Hutbergstr. 14b, 85256 Pasenbach, Germany; or visit www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/2689/index.html.

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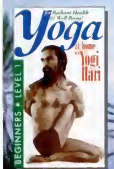
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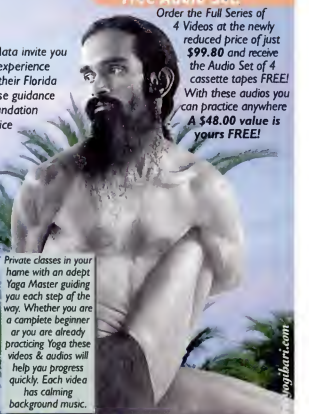



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# Vitamin D: Don't Block It Out

In recent years, most of us have heeded dermatologists' warnings and made sun protection a habit, lathering up with sunscreens and avoiding UV exposure in the critical midday hours. But while these protective measures help our skin, they also have us missing out on an essential sun benefit: vitamin D synthesis. New studies on the correlation between low sun exposure and diseases such as cancer and osteoporosis suggest that we may want to reconsider the wisdom of total sun avoidance.



Sun exposure is our primary source of vitamin D, a nutrient that helps the body make use of calcium and phosphorous. Unfortunately, the diligent practice of safe sunning—coupled in colder climates with long winter months of little sun exposure—is leaving people in short supply. "There's no question that, based on photochemistry, we require UV exposure to produce vitamin D in the skin," explains Dr. Michael Holick, Ph.D., M.D., of Boston University Medical Center. "Wearing sunscreen reduces the amount of UV light that reaches the skin by as much as 98 percent." He says that the farther north you live, the less vitamin D you produce, and adds that by age 70, vitamin D production in the body drops down to 30 percent of what it was at age 25. As the body grows sluggish in synthesizing enough of the vitamin, we subsequently absorb less calcium as well.

A lack of vitamin D can result in serious health problems, as researchers are now discovering. Certainly, osteoporosis is a concern, as the vitamin affects calcium absorption. But now it seems there's a cancer link as well. A University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill study showed that men living at high latitudes, and thus exposed to less sunlight, had low vitamin D serum levels and a higher risk of developing prostate cancer than those closer to the equator. Another study conducted by the Northern California Cancer Center revealed a 30 to 40 percent decrease in breast cancer risk among women who were situated in areas of high solar radiation (such as in the South); who had lived longest in sunny climes; who had frequent sunlight exposure; or whose daily dietary intake of vitamin D was 200 IU or more.

So how can we safely increase our vitamin D levels without running the risk of skin cancer? It's as simple as spending 10 to 15 minutes in the sun about three times a week, depending on your skin's sensitivity to sunlight as well as altitude, time of day, and season. Try to get some sun on your face, arms, and tops of your hands—without using sunscreen—in the mid-morning or mid-afternoon when sunlight isn't too direct. Keep in mind that fairer skin types require less sun exposure to produce the same amount of vitamin D as those with naturally darker complexions, since skin pigments screen out more sunlight.

While as much as 90 percent of our vitamin D supply stems from UV radiation, you can also get some through dietary means (see "Food Sources of Vitamin D"). The National Academy of Sciences recommends 200 IU daily for people under age 50, 400 IU for those age 51 to 70, and 600 IU for people over 70. If you want to take a supplement, it's safest to get your vitamin D in a daily multivitamin form to avoid overdosing.

Ultimately, the best way to ensure your vitamin D levels is to get out and enjoy the sunshine—in moderation. A dose of UV light might be just what the doctor ordered.—*Angela Pirisi*

| **Food Sources of Vitamin D** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 tsp. cod liver oil | 400 IU | 1 oz. canned sardines | 85 IU |
| 1 oz. canned salmon | 142 IU | 1 oz. cold cereal (fortified) | 49 IU |
| 1 cup milk | 100 IU | 1 oz. swiss cheese | 46 IU |
| | | 1 egg (cooked) | 23 IU |

PHOTOGRAPHS: EYEWIRE

PLANT WISDOM

# Kitchen Cures



My Mexican grandmother had a cure for everything. When the slightest childhood emergency arose, her terra-cotta kitchen would transform into a clinic. The same pantry crammed with culinary herbs doubled as a natural medicine cabinet.

Here's a sampling of some plant-based kitchen cures passed down through generations of Mexican households. If you find they work for you, perhaps you can share them with your grandchildren.

### Coughs

Slice a purple onion into thin spirals and layer. Drizzle with honey, then place in an air-tight container. In an hour or so, you will notice that the onion has released its "sweat." Take one or two tablespoons of this liquid every few hours.

Onions contain sulfur compounds which act as an antiseptic and help heal respiratory infections. Honey contains calcium, iron, magnesium, and vitamins B and C. (Note: Avoid giving honey to infants, as it may contain bacteria harmful to their developing immune systems.)

### Fever

Peel and thinly slice a potato, then dip in vinegar. Lie down and place slices on your forehead, holding them in place with a cloth. In a short time, you will notice that the potatoes have turned brown and have actually cooked. Mexican grandmothers, mine included, believe that the potatoes absorb the fever. Replace with fresh slices as needed.

This versatile vegetable is native to the Andes mountain regions of South America. Potatoes are a rich source of vitamin C, potassium, and fiber, and contain vitamin B.

### Sore Throat

When your throat is swollen, gargle with a strong infusion of basil, salt, and water.

In Mexico, basil is often grown in front of houses and *yerberias* (herb stores) for protection. Sweet basil is one of the most popular species of this herb in Mexican kitchens. A sprig is sometimes carried for good fortune and love. Basil has mildly sedative and antibacterial properties.

### Stomachache

For a stomachache accompanied by a slight fever, pluck a handful of rose petals. Make into a tea and add honey.

Though not normally thought of as edible, red roses have been part of folk medicine for centuries. Attar of rose, an essential oil, acts as an antidepressant and eases stomach pain. Rose hips are a rich source of vitamin C, and also contain vitamins A, B, and K.

*—Annette Sandoval*

*For more traditional cures, refer to* Homegrown Healing: Traditional Home Remedies from Mexico *by Annette Sandoval (Berkley Books, 1998).*

## Get Smart

Acquaint yourself with the 5,000-year-old Indian healing system of ayurveda using the *Ayurveda Authentica* CD-ROM. This software allows you to determine your predominant dosha(s) and plan a course for optimum mental and physical health. Your food chart, exercise plan, career path, and relationship qualities are just some of the elements you'll find in your *prakriti* (unique configuration of energy) profile. In addition, *Ayurveda Authentica* provides an extensive glossary of relevant Sanskrit words. The CD-ROM is Windows 95 and Windows NT compatible and costs $30. To order, call Nature Care Products Co. at (800) 923-9338, extension 10.

## Health Watch

▸ If vitamin and mineral supplements are part of your wellness routine, take note: You may want to look for the "USP" indication on the brands you buy. The U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP) puts supplements to the test on a variety of standards, such as whether a brand's pill disintegrates fast enough in the stomach to be digested and used in the body. *Source: UC Berkeley Newsletter*

▸ Cranberry juice has long been valued as a helpful treatment for urinary tract infections, and we now know how it works. A 1998 study conducted at Rutgers University identified a chemical compound in the berry that prevents the growth of E. coli, which can cause infection when present in the bladder and kidneys. *Source: New England Journal of Medicine*

▸ A recent article in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* suggests that more people think they're lactose intolerant than is really the case. But that depends on who's drinking the milk. While only 15 percent of white Americans actually experience some degree of lactose intolerance (and less than 5 percent for those of Northern European descent), the numbers are much higher for others. A full 90 percent of Asian Americans and 70 percent of African Americans experience the condition. Native Americans and Mexican Americans also have much higher rates of the intolerance than Caucasians. *Sources: Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine; UC Berkeley Newsletter*

▸ Good news for those facing surgery: A guided imagery tape dramatically reduced bleeding, anxiety, and length of hospital stay in a double-blind study of 335 patients. Says the audiotape's creator, therapist Belleruth Naparstek, LISW, "The fact that a simple and inexpensive audiotape, listened to a couple of times, can save an insurance company the cost of a full day's hospital stay will very likely change the way this 'alternative therapy' is perceived." *Source: Advances in Mind-Body Medicine*

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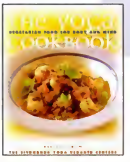


# Yogic Breakfast



Apple-Fig Salad

The morning meal, more than any other, reminds us of the essential function of food—to fuel our bodies. But when most of us think of breakfast, only a few foods and beverages come to mind. At Sivananda, the breakfast that follows morning asanas and meditation includes a wide variety of foods. Whole grains provide a rich source of complete carbohydrates. Fruit satisfies the longing for sweetness. Protein, in the form of tofu or legumes, helps with producing energy.




The following recipes represent some of the morning fare served at Sivananda ashrams. With a minimum of effort, you can make these nourishing meals at home and start a balanced day.

## Apple-Fig Salad

*Serves 6*

- 6 dried or fresh figs
- 2 apples, sliced
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 1¾ cups chopped walnuts
- 2 Tbsp. shredded unsweetened coconut
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 4 Tbsp. honey
- ½ cup plain yogurt or sour cream

If using dried figs, soak them in cold water for 1 to 2 hours, then drain. Cut the fresh or dried figs into quarters. Stir the fruit, nuts, lemon juice, and honey together. Serve at once, topped with yogurt or sour cream.

## Orange Couscous

*Serves 4 to 6*

- 12 dried apricots, thinly sliced
- 2½ cups orange juice
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 cup couscous
- 3 Tbsp. grated fresh or shredded coconut, toasted
- 1 orange, peeled and divided into segments (optional)

Place the apricots, orange juice, and salt in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Stir in the couscous and remove from heat. Cover the pan and let stand for 5 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed; the couscous should be light and fluffy, and slightly grainy to the bite. Place in individual bowls and top with toasted coconut, and orange segments. Serve warm.

## Oatmeal-Yogurt Cream

*Serves 3 to 4*

- ⅓ cup finely chopped almonds
- ½ cup rolled, cut oats
- Grated zest and juice of ½ lemon or orange
- 2 Tbsp. maple syrup, or sweetener of choice
- 1¼ cups creamy plain yogurt
- 1 Tbsp. chopped almonds, toasted

Heat the broiler. Mix together ⅓ cup chopped almonds and oats. Spread out on a baking sheet and place under the broiler for about 2 minutes, stirring frequently to brown evenly. Leave to cool.

Mix the lemon or orange zest and juice with the maple syrup and stir into the yogurt. Fold in the almond mixture. Spoon into individual glass dishes and top with toasted chopped almonds.

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF FIRESIDE

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# Lower Blood Pressure

**Can you suggest methods of lowering high blood pressure naturally, without medication?**
**—Abbie Connell, New York**

Our heart rate changes with every beat, even when we're sitting still. This heart rate variability is affected by both the sympathetic nervous system—the signal to gear up for a stressful situation—and the parasympathetic nervous system, which tells us to relax. When we're angry or upset, the heart receives mixed messages, causing a jerky heart pattern. This extra wear-and-tear causes blood pressure to rise.

By shifting your emotional state, you can physically affect your heart rate so that your entire physiological system is working more efficiently. Try a technique called Freeze Frame. First, recognize the stressful feeling and freeze-frame it. Then shift your focus away from the racing mind or disturbed emotions. Breathe through your heart area to help focus your energy for 10 seconds or more. Recall a positive feeling or time you've had and attempt to re-experience it. Then, ask your heart what would be a more efficient response to the situation—one that will minimize future stress. Use this one-minute practice regularly to help keep your blood pressure at safe levels.

*This month's question was answered by Rollin McCraty, M.A., director of research at the Institute of HeartMath in Boulder Creek, CA.* The HeartMath Solution *(HarperSanFrancisco, 1999) explains the research behind the Freeze Frame® technique.*

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# Why Do I Eat When I'm Not Hungry?

## How to use your body's own energy system to overcome most addictive urges

In *Why Do I Eat When I'm Not Hungry?* (Doubleday) the author, Dr. Callahan details remarkable new procedures that can be used to successfully help any addiction. The Callahan Techniques' use a combination of ancient wisdom and modern science regarding the body's energy system to combine old and new methods. They are drug free and non-invasive–offering new hope for anyone who has ever had trouble losing weight and keeping it off. This book and video package teaches you how to:

- Keep from binge eating
- Relieve anxiety
- Eliminate Self-Sabotage
- Live happily on balanced diet
- Overcome Gluttony
- Reduce your desire to overeat

### This Is Not Another Diet!

Most people are experts on diets. They know which one works the best. The problem is not the diet but the ability to stick to the diet long enough to lose weight. And, maintain healthy eating habits to prevent future weight gain. Most people need help. Think of how much easier it would be if you could eliminate your desire or craving for all those fattening or unhealthy foods.

**Addiction is when you can't help yourself.**

At last, now there is help with a simple easy-to-do technique (it can help with all addictions). Discovered by Dr. Callahan, author of the ***Five Minute Phobia Cure***, this process works on over 90% of those who use it. The procedures will drastically reduce or eliminate the urge or desire to eat when you shouldn't.

It takes only minutes. While you think about how good it would be to eat or drink or smoke your favorite substance, do the simple treatment and feel your desire vanish! The temporary reduction or elimination of craving is immediate!

It is a natural, drug free process that appears to get at the REASON why you eat when you shouldn't or can't stop eating when you want. Many notice that after the brief treatment, not only is their urge to indulge gone but they feel remarkably relaxed and free of tension.

The simple energy treatment temporarily decreases or removes the stress and tension that fired your desire. This can be an important aid in helping you stick to a sane and safe diet plan.

### Eliminate "Self-Sabotage"

Dr. Callahan found that 99% of all addicts suffer from a problem he calls "psychological reversal" You may have heard it called a "psychological block" or "self-sabotage" This condition can turn you into your own worst enemy and prevent you from achieving your goals.

Learn how to recognize and correct this self-destruct mode. Both the book and the videotape detail quick easy steps to help you out of this negative pattern. The book explains why we get addicted and what to do about it. The videotape explains the nature of addiction, leads you step-by-step through the simple procedures and shows you how to recognize and correct psychological reversal. The videotape also demonstrates the power of these revolutionary techniques on live participants who appeared on several national TV talk shows. It ends with an actual treatment you can follow for review.

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"I asked my problem patients to try your technique and in one week it has proven 100% successful for those who have used it." David Kerchner, Regional Director, Hollywood Weight Loss Centre, Ellwood, PA.

"I have referred many patients to Dr. Callahan and have been repeatedly gratified by the results." Harvey Ross, M.D., author of *Fighting Depression*.

"Dr. Callahan's technique is one of the most revolutionary and helpful therapy procedures I have ever come across." Dr. Gary Emery, co-author *Anxiety Disorders and Phobias.*

See for yourself! These exciting new techniques were demonstrated live on national television. The anchor on CNN news lost her desire for chocolate in minutes. Others with addictions to all kinds of food, or candy, cake, hamburgers, soft drinks, etc were helped in just minutes. See how it was done; fast and painless.

### Dr. Callahan Cautions!

The simple procedures will need to be repeated. The intensity and frequency with which overwhelming cravings return should decrease over time. The treatment lasts for varying amounts of time depending on the individual's stress level. But, it is so easy to repeat and can be done within minutes; leaving you relaxed and with no desire to eat, or drink, or smoke when you shouldn't.

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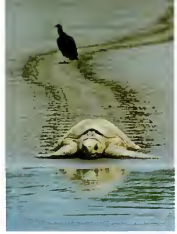
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*Dr. Roger J. Callahan is a member of The American Academy of Psychologists Treating Addiction and the Better Business Bureau.*

EARTH CARE

# Save a Sea Turtle Vacation



PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF CARIBBEAN CONSERVATION

It's not easy being a green sea turtle these days. Having barely endured centuries of poaching for its meat and eggs, this endangered 350-pound giant now contends with modern obstacles such as real estate development and marine pollution. Luckily, it has the Caribbean Conservation Corporation (CCC) on its side. Founded by sea turtle expert Dr. Archie Carr more than 40 years ago in Gainesville, Florida, CCC is the oldest sea turtle research and conservation effort in the world. The nonprofit organization monitors the well-being of the green, leatherback, and other turtles from its bases in San Jose and Tortuguero, Costa Rica, using statistical models, satellites, and remote tracking. The information gathered helps local governments assess the effects of construction and illegal poaching, and monitor the effectiveness of local conservation efforts.



Volunteers have been the backbone of the project since its inception. They accompany the scientists at Tortuguero, the world's largest nesting spot for green turtles, as they delicately collect data while the skittish reptiles lay their eggs—usually after nightfall, and sometimes in the company of would-be poachers. "After a couple nights working alongside the staff researchers," explains Cindy Taft, director of International Programs at CCC, "a volunteer does everything that the researchers do, with the exception of actual tagging, as this is somewhat of an acquired skill. They learn how to 'read' turtle tracks at night by feeling for them in the sand, to tell whether the animal was heading into or out of the sea. We show them how to approach a turtle when she's in the trance-like state of nesting, as this is the best time to collect data. The autumn sessions may also afford volunteers the opportunity to witness the hatchlings' dash toward the sea shortly after emergence."

If you count yourself among those concerned with the welfare of these creatures—and you have some vacation time to spare—you can participate in the 1999 Green Turtle Program, scheduled in weeklong sessions from June 26 through October 17. For a partially tax-deductible fee of $1,280 (or $1,685 for a two-week stay), you'll help measure turtles, record data, and conduct beach watches. You can contact the Caribbean Conservation Corporation at (800) 678-7853 or at www.ccc.org for more information.

*—Jennifer Barrett*


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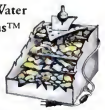
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# So Long Cellulite

An estimated 80 percent of women have some cellulite, and while this condition is most often associated with being overweight, it is also found among men and those who are underweight. Inactivity and hormones can contribute to the problem, but the primary cause of cellulite is the constant ingestion of chemical additives and preservatives typical of the Western diet. The body's lymphatic system, responsible for filtering toxins, deposits these substances in areas of the body away from the vital organs—namely the hips, buttocks, and thighs. Here, due to genetic and structural considerations, the cellulite creates lumpy, rippled, "orange peel" skin that is often bloated and sensitive.

In addition to a natural foods diet, exercise, dry brushing, and lymphatic and deep-tissue massage, a daily herbal body scrub will help reduce cellulite. This formula blends ivy, which contains phytofactors considered excellent for cellulite reduction, with the diuretic and detoxifying effects of grapefruit and juniper berry essential oils.

**Body Scrub**

**6 oz. unfragranced shower gel**
**1½ oz. ivy extract**
**4 Tbsp. black walnut hulls**
**60 drops grapefruit essential oil**
**30 drops juniper berry essential oil**
**15 drops bitter orange essential oil**
**15 drops cypress essential oil**

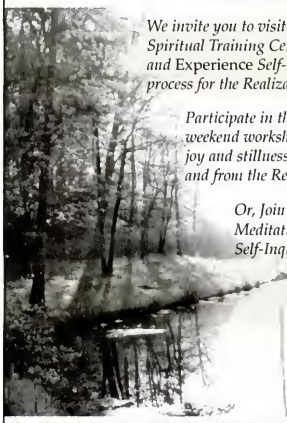
Pour the gel and ivy extract into a measuring cup or beaker and stir. Add essential oils, stirring well until completely blended. Using a funnel, pour the mixture into an 8 oz. plastic bottle. Before using, add 1 Tbsp. black walnut hulls to 1 to 2 oz. gel in a small bowl. Massage over body daily while showering, using a loofah, cloth, or body mitt.

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# Restoring the Lost Art of Dialogue

**By Derk Richardson**



As public discourse in the late twentieth century degenerates into TV talk show shouting matches, civil—let alone elegant and enlightening—dialogue joins old-growth redwoods, marbled murrelets, and honest politicians on the list of endangered species. Yet for the past 25 years, Michael and Justine Toms have made dialogue the cornerstone of their pioneering radio program "New Dimensions." For one hour each week, after the introductory proposition, "It is only through a change of consciousness that the world will be transformed," Michael Toms engages a guest thinker in a conversation exploring anything from personal creativity to deep ecology, from ancient mythology to holistic medicine.

Michael and Justine launched the enterprise known as the New Dimensions Foundation—which includes New Dimensions Radio, a monthly newsletter, book and tape distribution, a Web site, and plans for a weekly television show—in 1973, after hearing a talk by psychologist Charles Tart, in which he declared, "We may be in the midst of the most dramatic shift in human consciousness in the history of the planet—and nobody is paying attention." The Tomses incorporated the nonprofit with the goal of getting people to pay attention. Within months, they were producing half-hour radio interviews and had created a radically new forum for innovative—and sometimes ancient—ideas relating to health, personal growth, science, and the life of the planet. "Once we started doing radio," says Michael, "we realized it was an exquisite medium for exploring ideas and carrying on dialogues—the appropriate technology for carrying on the oral tradition."

Over the years, with Justine primarily acting as executive director and producer, Michael has engaged in radio conversations with Deepak Chopra, Buckminster Fuller, the Dalai Lama, Joseph Campbell, Alice Walker, Robert Bly, Ram Dass, and hundreds of others. In most cases, "New Dimensions" presented these thinkers long before they were profiled or interviewed by Bill Moyers, Larry King, Terry Gross, or other contemporary TV and radio interviewers. "In 1975, we interviewed Dr. Andrew Weil," Michael notes. "In 1997, Andy was on the cover of *Time* magazine. I guess you could say *Time* was 22 years behind 'New Dimensions.'" More than just being ahead of the mainstream media pack, the program changes the rules of the interviewing game. Rather than simply presenting biographical profiles or plugging the guest's latest published product, "New Dimensions" develops authentic give-and-take conversations, looking deeply into ideas and their implications.

At a time when attack journalism has become the norm of what linguist (and "New Dimensions" guest) Deborah Tannen calls the "argument culture," the Tomses' approach is refreshingly nonadversarial. "Our passion is talking to other people about their passions," Michael says. "I'm not here to prove the guests wrong or right. I'm here to create a space that allows them to say whatever they have to say as completely and as fully as possible. It's a new way of exploring ideas. We're not talking past one another, but really delving into the deeper nature of the situation, the story underneath, where people are saying new things. I can go much deeper that way than if I were adversarial, because when you let go of your position and are open to other possibilities, that's where real creativity happens. And we respect our listeners enough to let them decide whether they resonate with it or not."

The exploratory, nonconfrontational approach is rooted in shared values. "New Dimensions" is not simply "infotainment." It presents ideas about, and often strategies for, improving the quality of life. Justine explains that she and Michael cannot help but be emotionally and intellectually involved with the content of the program. "The questions we ask on the program are often questions we are asking ourselves," she says, "as we try to figure out better ways of being a culture on this planet. We invite people who we feel are saying interesting, life-affirming things, who are making contributions."

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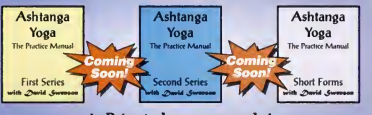
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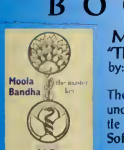
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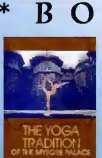



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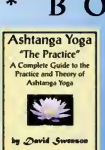
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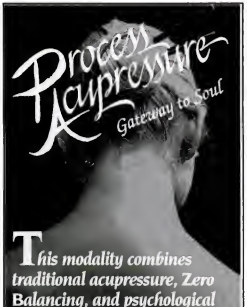
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A pretense of objectivity is not part of the mix. Take the recently inaugurated 13-part New Dimensions Radio series, "Deep Ecology for the 21st Century," featuring interviews with David Suzuki, the late Edward Abbey, Joanna Macy, Theodore Roszak, Paul Ehrlich, Gary Snyder, and others.

"From the typical 'Journalism 101' perspective," says Michael, "a balanced presentation would be to interview the lumber companies to get their viewpoint—why we need to take out the trees and so forth. The fact is, that view is out there everywhere and the view we're presenting is not. What we're doing is presenting the view that would bring us back into balance."

Syndication on 300 North American public and community radio stations and distribution via various other channels worldwide (see "Resources") give New Dimensions Radio an estimated audience of more than 7 million listeners in 132 countries. And in 1997 the Tomses also produced a pilot series of television programs which were first transmitted via satellite on the Wisdom Channel in 1998, with plans for a weekly TV presence in 1999.

These multiple media outlets dramatically increase the capacity of "New Dimensions" to bring what Michael calls "real stories" to a global audience. "Our outreach has expanded exponentially in the last year or so," Michael says. "Right now, somebody is listening to 'New Dimensions' somewhere in the world. We're not interested in getting bigger, but it's like we're being called to move to that next level."

Last October, to celebrate their 25 years of broadcasting, Michael and Justine staged an anniversary conference, "Turning to Wisdom," which included three days of talks and panel discussions featuring Jean Houston, Fritjof Capra, Bernie Siegel, Lama Surya Das, and others. More than 600 people gathered in the Spangenberg Theater in Palo Alto, California, to hear lectures and panel discussions by a variety of speakers chosen, Michael explains, as representative of hundreds of

others who had been interviewed on "New Dimensions."

By bringing the program's founders, guests, and listeners together in one place, the conference underscored the notion of "New Dimensions" as a community forum dedicated to facilitating wise consideration of the problems facing humankind and strategies for bringing that wisdom into practice. Twenty-five years after hearing Charles Tart talk about "the most dramatic shift in human consciousness" in history, Michael and Justine keep that notion at the forefront of their work. "We're in the birth pangs of a new way of living on the earth," Michael says. "It's probably going to take several generations for it to unfold. The ecological challenge is, I think, the most critical. No planet, no people, you know? But I think we're in the midst of that major shift, and it's an incredibly exciting time to be alive." ◆

*Derk Richardson writes about popular culture for* Yoga Journal, *the San Francisco* Bay Guardian, *and the Gate (www.sfgate.com).*

**RESOURCES**

New Dimensions Radio, P.O. Box 569, Ukiah, CA 95482; (800) 935-8273; outside USA, (707) 468-9830; www.newdimensions.org.

Request a copy of the bimonthly newsletter *New Dimensions*; it provides listings of the global broadcasting network (including radio and cable-audio stations in America, outlets in Europe and Australia, and worldwide shortwave broadcast), and an extensive tape archive. "New Dimensions" programs are archived and can be accessed 24 hours a day with RealAudio computer software on the NDR Web site.

# Briefly Noted Music

**By Derk Richardson**

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: WORLD VOICES 1** *(World Class Records, available from Hearts of Space; P.O. Box 31321, San Francisco, CA 94131; www.hos.com).* World music purists may cringe at the liberties taken with technological enhancements and cross-cultural blending on *World Voices 1*. VOX adds a contemporary synthesizer drone to a seventh-century voice-and-flute melody by Hildegard von Bingen; gypsy/classical singer Bielka Nemirovski multitracks her voice against a lush string section; composer Frédérick Rousseau updates a twelfth-century haiku with a high-tech combination of plucked Japanese biwa, vocals, and space-music electronics. But while so many current world fusions dilute and demystify the soul of indigenous music, the experiments on this collection result in expansive sonic palettes and performances that range from the emotionally saturated to the contemplative and coolly cerebral.



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*4455; www.dancingcat.com).* When Spanish and Mexican cowboys brought the acoustic guitar to the Hawaiian islands in the 1830s, indigenous musicians loosened the strings to accommodate their own tunings and developed a "slack-key" fingerpicking style that by now has influenced everyone from mainland guitar wizards Ry Cooder and Bob Brozman to pianist George Winston. Slack-key's return to popularity has made it possible for masters such as Ledward Kaapana to collaborate with a wide variety of pop, country, and bluegrass artists. For *Waltz of the Wind,* he records with friends Alison Krauss, Ricky Skaggs, Jerry Douglas, Sonny Landreth, and others. While the guests take turns at slack-key guitar, Kaapana's big-hearted singing keeps the fusions fluid.




**DIVINATION: SACRIFICE** *(Meta; 611 Broadway, #541, New York, NY 10012; (323) 466-5141).* Marking yet another development in the musical path of producer Bill Laswell (acclaimed for the recent remix projects *Dreams of Freedom: Ambient Translations of Bob Marley in Dub* and *Panthalassa: The Music of Miles Davis 1969-1974*), *Sacrifice* is one of the first two releases of his new Meta Records, a label dedicated to spiritually oriented music and spoken-word recordings. It comprises four extended tracks of slowly unfolding ambient sounds that range from deep subterranean moans to sparkling night-sky twinkles. The latter, on the 16-minute pieces "Reflection" and "Still," are provided by the chiming electric 36-string zither of ambient pioneer Laraaji, advocate and teacher of "soundhealing" and laughter meditation; the former by Laswell's masterful manipulations of electronics and distinctive bass playing. Some of the aural atmospherics stretch out like sci-fi soundtracks, others are more abstract in their spacious textures, but none limit



themselves to soothing New Age stereotypes, and all reward deep listening.

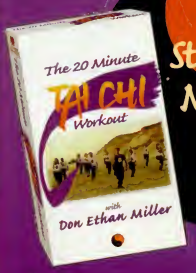
**VARIOUS ARTISTS: SACRED TREASURES: CHORAL MASTERWORKS FROM RUSSIA** *(Hearts of Space; P.O. Box 31321, San Francisco, CA 94131; www.hos.com).* Tapping the spatial qualities of Christian liturgical music from the Russian Orthodox Church, *Sacred Treasures* features nine different men's and mixed choirs from Russia, Bulgaria, and the former USSR, emphasizing the grand sonic architecture of music by Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky, and other composers. The multiphonic textures of Eastern European choral singing have enjoyed a certain world music cachet since the Bulgarian women's choirs skyrocketed from cult status to international celebrity in the 1980s. But where the popular Bulgarian recordings feature lively village dance rhythms and joyous yelps, any sudden dynamic surprises or jarring shifts in mood have been deliberately edited from this compilation, so the temperament remains gentle and contemplative. Over the course of 15 gorgeously produced tracks (with the pealing of great cathedral bells as bookends), it is not the explicit religious content of the songs but rather the sweeping resonance of perfectly harmonized voices that ultimately transports the listener into a heavenly realm.




**JAMI SIEBER: SECOND SIGHT** *(Out Front Music; P.O. Box 12188; Seattle, WA 98102; jlsieber@aol.com).* Best known as colorful accompanist to contemporary singer-songwriters (most notably Ferron), Jami Sieber transforms her acoustic and electric cellos into vehicles of complex passions on this eclectic CD. Dark and meditative moods predominate, but Sieber looks deeply into their ramifications and opens a multitude of enthralling musical and spiritual pathways. Playing solo on two numbers, and weaving her mercurial tones through small chamber- and pop-ensemble set-



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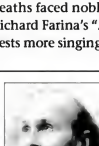
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tings (variously featuring percussion, piano, accordion, bass, drums, trumpet, and reeds) on the rest, Sieber also steps out as a vocalist. Her wordless vocalizing beautifully shadows her cello here and there; her poetic recitations prove compelling on the subjects of lives well lived and deaths faced nobly; and her version of Richard Farina's "A Swallow Song" suggests more singing in Sieber's future. For an album so ambitious in its breadth, *Second Sight* neither loses focus nor strays far from a tranquil center.

**SOLAS: THE WORDS THAT REMAIN** *(Shanachie; 37 E. Clinton St., Newton, NJ 07860; (973) 579-7763; www.shanachie.com).* Any Celtic-music fans weary of the ethereal swoons of Enya or the heavy-handed histrionics of "Riverdance" (which seem to define Celtic music in the popular imagination these days) would do well to investigate Solas. True to traditional roots—with plenty of instrumental virtuosity to spin off jigs, reels, and airs—but forward-looking enough to broaden its sparkling acoustic sound with occasional electric bass, keyboards, and drums, this Irish-American band provides a much-needed antidote of authenticity to the scene. Lead singer Karan Casey's finely grained soprano voice could be the sole focus of many a group, but equal billing goes to John Doyle's guitars, Winifred Horan's fiddles, Mick McAuley's accordion and concertina, and multi-instrumentalist Seamus Egan's array of flutes, whistles, mandolin, guitar, banjo, bodhran, and percussion. On their third recording as a group, the Solas members easily shift gears between up-tempo dance numbers, updates of old Celtic ballads, and such socially conscious songs as Woody Guthrie's "Pastures of Plenty" and Peggy Seeger's "Song of Choice."







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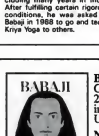
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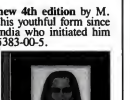
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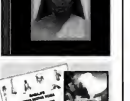



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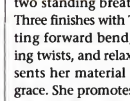
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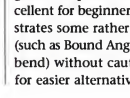
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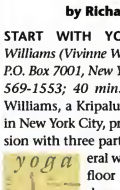
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# Video

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**START WITH YOGA** *with Vivinne Williams (Vivinne Williams, FDR Station, P.O. Box 7001, New York, NY 10150; (212) 569-1553; 40 min.; $24.99).* Vivinne Williams, a Kripalu yoga teacher based in New York City, provides a no-frills session with three parts. Part One is a general warm-up, with simple floor exercises for the abdomen, spine, hips, and groins. Part Two is an interesting sequence that includes Down Dog, Mountain, a side bend and bent-knee position, and two standing breathing exercises. Part Three finishes with Triangle, Cobra, a sitting forward bend, sitting and reclining twists, and relaxation. Williams presents her material with assurance and grace. She promotes the practice as "excellent for beginners," but then demonstrates some rather advanced positions (such as Bound Angle with a full forward bend) without cautions or suggestions for easier alternatives or helpful props.



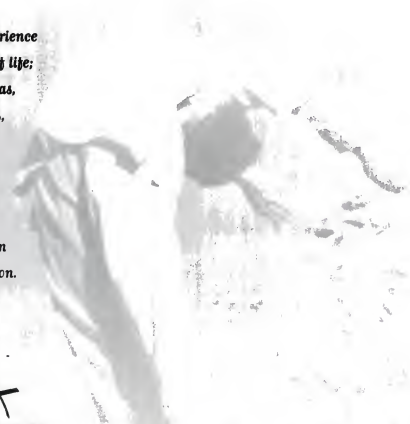
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The work, while mild, is more appropriate for experienced beginners who know something about the pitfalls and possibilities of the postures.

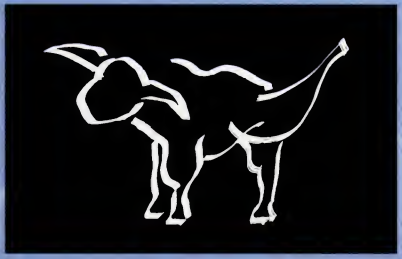
**KRIPALU YOGA, GENTLE** *with Carolyn Lundeen (Kripalu Yoga Fellowship; P.O. Box 793, Lenox, MA 01240; (413) 448-3400 or (800) 438-3199; 60 min.; $19.95).* In this tape, Carolyn Lundeen, a Kripalu yoga teacher and director of the Kripalu Yoga Teachers Association, has put together




two 30-minute "flows," which can be done either separately or consecutively. The first includes a sitting warm-up, with a breathing exercise and stretches for the shoulders and spine; a lunge and two all-fours exercises; a series of simple standing postures; a series of floor exercises; and a short relaxation. The second flow includes two floor warm-ups; a standing "breath of joy" exercise and a series of standing postures; a sitting forward bend and Bridge; a two-minute interlude dedicated to spontaneous movement; and relaxation. Lundeen is an excellent teacher. She clearly understands sequencing and alignment, gives simpler alternatives to more challenging postures, and encourages students to work to their own capacity. Like other Kripalu Center videos I've seen lately, this one sets aside a few minutes near the end of formal instruction for playful, unstructured movement, which is a nice touch. My only criticism of Lundeen's presentation is her penchant for passive instructions, like "let the knees bend" instead of "bend your knees," which I find mildly distracting. But this is a well-conceived and well-executed practice appropriate for all levels of students.

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*for the set).* Lilias is back! The *grande dame* of American yoga instruction offers a pair of "workouts" for morning wake-up and evening slow-down. The morning workout includes a series of seated (in a chair) exercises for the feet, hands, and spine; a seated Sun Salutation; a series of chair-supported standing poses; a simple backbend and reclining twist; and relaxation. The evening workout includes seated stretches for the shoulders and spine, hands and feet; three simple chair-supported standing poses; a pair of all-fours exercises for the spine; a simple backbend and reclining twist; and relaxation. Lilias gives her usual stellar performance. She's a pleasure to watch—inviting, encouraging, accepting, and, most of all, enthusiastic, radiating what she calls a "good-to-be-alive" aura. These are both very mild "workouts" for all levels of students with an hour to spare just before, and at the end of, a busy day.




**SEASONAL YOGA: SPRING & SUMMER and SEASONAL YOGA: FALL & WINTER** *with Elizabeth Coston (ESBYS International; 2800 4th St. N., Ste. 144, St. Petersburg, FL 33704; (800) 756-5175; 45 min. each; $19.95 each).* These videos were developed by Glory Patterson, a certified Yoga Master. She and video model Elizabeth Coston operate the Yoga Central studio in Tavares, Florida. The sequences are based on the interesting idea that our yoga practice should be adjusted to the "rhythms of nature, the flow of Gaia, so that the optimum effects of the seasons are experienced and synchronized within and without." While I admire these two earnest efforts, I was disappointed in the final result. I honestly couldn't find much difference between the two sequences. The problem is that the teachers told me *what* to do, but not much about *why* I was doing it, or how to go about devising sequences of my own. Why, for example, are Sun Salutation and Bharadvaja's Twist appropriate for winter, and Moon Salutation and Half-Fish Twist for summer? Just as important, what are the principles and strategies for structuring seasonal practices? As it is, I can't imagine doing the same 45-minute practice every day for an entire spring and summer. These intermediate-to-advanced sequences are well-organized and competently modeled. At times, though, the instructions are vague, and, in the case of the inversions, are provided without any cautions for menstruation or neck problems.




**POWER YOGA: ENERGIZE (1)** *with Bryan Kest (Warner Home Video; (800) 479-1193; 54 min.; $14.95).* First there was Superman, "more powerful than a locomotive." Then came "power to the people," "power lunch," and Power Rangers. I guess it was inevitable that someday we'd have...Power Yoga. Of course, traditional hatha yoga has for hundreds of years cultivated the dynamic (*prana*) and static (*kundalini*) aspects of the universal feminine "power" (*shakti*) resident in each of us. In this case, as taught by Bryan Kest, owner of the Power Yoga Center in Santa Monica, California, Power Yoga seems to be a take-off on the popular Ashtanga vinyasa style of yoga developed by Sri Krishnamacharya and his student Pattabhi Jois. It's not clear to me why this particular approach merits a special name of its own, though, to be fair, I only reviewed the first of three tapes in Kest's series. There's no denying that the practice is powerful, but it's simply a Sun Salutation-linked "flow" of standing postures, with some floor exercises tacked on at the end. Kest has an intense presence and a compelling, if ungrammatical way ("Be where you're at!") of expressing himself. His instruction is pretty straightforward ("Stretch!"), without a lot of niggling over details. He certainly keeps things hopping (literally) right along, so if you're looking for a *real* workout at an intermediate to advanced level, this is, um, where it's at. ◆




*Contributing editor Richard Rosen teaches yoga in Berkeley and Oakland, California.*

## Yoga for Cancer

continued from page 49

Breathing practices can have another benefit, Waz notes. "Prana not only sustains life, it also acts as a cleanser. With cancer and chemotherapy, our bodies are quite polluted. You're putting in industrial-strength toxins. A very simple way to help the body's natural cleansing system is to put more oxygen in it, because oxygen goes into the bloodstream and helps eliminate toxins. So if someone here at Commonweal can't do asanas, I give them breathing exercises. They're going to feel better just opening the chest and inhaling."

## Look Within

Waz sees meditation as a crucial dimension of yoga. For people dealing with life-threatening illness, with all the psychological and emotional havoc that wreaks, meditation can offer a method to quiet the terrified voices that jabber in our heads. The simplest forms of meditation ask us to be physically still and direct our attention toward an object. We may be led to imagine a particular scene or visual image, or we may pay attention to sensations in the body, traveling through it from top to bottom; one very common object of attention in meditation is our breathing, the in-and-out motion of the breath that occurs automatically many times each minute and which we are rarely aware of.

Cancer patients often find themselves in distracted states of mind—bombarded as they are by frightening, sometimes contradictory, information, subjected to invasive, painful procedures, and not-always-compassionate medical care. When our minds are so grievously disturbed, we may find it impossible to make crucial decisions or relate satisfactorily to our family and friends. With the practices of concentration (*Dharana*) and meditation (*Dhyana*) which yoga affords us, a patient can focus and let go of nagging preoccupations.

Again Dr. Fair's experience comes to mind, perhaps because his mastery of meditation was so hard-won. He found




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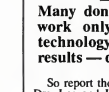
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that learning to meditate was more difficult for him than the physical postures or breathing. At first he floundered, not sure what he was doing. But with focus on his breath, he was able to steady his mind. Then he learned to concentrate on the "third eye," a point in the middle of the forehead. As an aid to concentration, he licked his finger and placed a drop of saliva on his forehead so that he could actually feel it.

Now he is able to achieve concentration without this help, and has gone on to add other practices to his meditation sessions. If he starts to lose concentration, he always returns to focus on his breathing. Dr. Fair is so enthusiastic about meditation that he has built a meditation garden, complete with Japanese-style stones and a pond, at his Long Island weekend house. When he is meditating in noisy Manhattan, he keeps the image of this garden in his mind.

"The great teachings, and life itself," Waz says, "show us that most of our terror, our dread, our problems lie in the past or in the future. Whereas basically, right here and now is pretty much okay." Control of the mind in meditation can lead from wanting what we cannot have, from craving, grieving, and being unhappy, to just arriving in this moment, where we may possibly experience a feeling of contentment, and may be able to make better decisions about our medical and complementary care.

## Reach Out

Among the fundamental issues that predispose us to disease and affect our healing is our estrangement from ourselves and others. Now some physician-researchers are beginning to emphasize this dimension as a key aspect of coping with illness.

Dr. Dean Ornish has written about the various forms of isolation, including the social and spiritual, and the disconnection from our very own being—our feelings and sensations, our inner sense of ourselves. In everyday life, we tend to focus so thoroughly on the external world—meeting the requirements of job and family, hoping for the satisfactions of future fulfillment—that we lose awareness of the actual, intimate, moment-by-moment experience of our own physical, mental, and emotional selves.

Yoga postures require us to hold still and to be aware of our bodies. Asana, pranayama, and meditation begin to break down that distance from ourselves and bring us into close contact with our sensations and feelings. Knowing how our bodies really feel, we can notice when we are stressed and can make decisions about our activities and our attitudes that can change our relationship to our cancer healing. That is, yoga can help us open up to different ways of integrating our experience. For example, when faced with a challenging medical procedure, rather than tensing ourselves against it or going away mentally, because of our yoga practice we may be able to relax and welcome the procedure, thus minimizing its stressful effects.

Eileen Hadidian, a professional musician and music professor, responded to her own difficult medical experiences by urging oncologists at local hospitals to enlist the aid of nutritionists in helping patients mitigate the effects of cancer treatments. A slender woman, bald from chemo, Eileen looks at me with large, alert eyes. As we talk in the comfortable living room at the Ting-Sha retreat, she smiles often. She leans back gratefully into the couch cushions. Her cancer now infiltrates her spine, and she has told me that her back hurts most of the time. But yoga, which she studies in classes at a community center near her home, helps her tolerate this pain.

"I went back to doing yoga a month after surgery—lumpectomy and lymph node dissection," she says. "I was sore, but within a half hour of going back to my yoga class, my arm went from being able to go this far"—she holds her arm just a few inches away from her body—"to going up [higher]. And so I said, 'Bingo!' The class caters to all levels. What I did was I just tailored it to what I could do, and then week after week I was able to do more and more."

"The instructor was aware of your condition?" I ask. "She was trusting you not to push yourself beyond where you needed to go?"

"Exactly. She was very good about say-

ing to me, 'Just do what you can. Follow your body, follow your intuition.' So that's what I did. And it felt great. I breezed through radiation, had minimal side effects. The fatigue that comes with radiation set in just during the last week. So my recovery was relatively easy. And I attribute a lot of that to the yoga. Along with meditation, visualization, acupuncture, and herbs."

Three years after the radiation treatments, when she began to experience severe back pain and discovered her cancer had metastasized to her spine, Eileen had to stop going to the yoga class. But then a chance experience allowed her to adapt her yoga practice to suit her changed condition.

"I had a one-time yoga session with a woman, the mother of one of my young music students, who is training to be a yoga teacher. We had a very gentle session where she gave me about four different postures that I could do. This was back when I had a lot more pain. She propped me up with pillows so when I did Child's Pose it was not the regular Child's Pose but one that was supported. I've been doing those postures ever since.

"It would be wonderful if someone had a little traveling yoga practice, and went around to people's homes, for people with multiple sclerosis, cancer, chronic fatigue, or AIDS. It would have to be somebody who knew enough about physiology to say 'Okay, here are some things that you can do.' It could be such a service, because people living with physical limitations need to be empowered by being shown what they *can* do."

## Be Well

A number of physician-directed programs, like Dr. Ornish's Prostate Cancer Lifestyle Trial and the Breast Cancer Personal Support and Lifestyle Integration Program in San Francisco, train patients in yoga postures, breathing, and meditation techniques.

Cancer-help retreats offer intensive contact and support. In addition, some individual yoga instructors are adapting their teachings for patients limited by illness or disability. In these settings, yoga teachers work individually with their cancer-patient students. They have


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learned to be extremely sensitive to special needs, to maintain strong, open communication with the patient, and to creatively adapt postures and other yogic elements.

Perhaps the most compelling reason cancer patients are turning to yoga is this: It shows us how a person stricken with a serious illness, instead of "running away" from their threatened body, can connect more strongly to that body and begin to experience self-empowerment and well-being. As we engage our physical selves in the precise body gestures of yoga, our minds come along, growing accustomed to focusing on the affairs of this moment and leaving worries and future-thinking behind. As we breathe and meditate, our minds grow more clear and steady.

The physical benefits of yoga seem obvious to a cancer patient. Range of motion, flexibility, strength, relaxation, and a sense of bodily well-being are enhanced by practicing the postures. But there is an additional, more mystical, benefit of yoga.

Waz Thomas calls this an experience of one's "essential nature," and uses the language of the great spiritual traditions to characterize it: "A stillness, a oneness, a unity; the void, the great ground of being." Another yoga therapist speaks of the "life force."

Gary Kraftsow, of the Center for Viniyoga Studies in Hawaii, speaks of helping patients "connect with their hearts," achieving a deeper union with themselves and something larger than themselves. These practitioners are attempting to put words to an experience that is subtle but unmistakable, and precious to anyone who has experienced it.

Managing one's cancer can be a difficult, demanding task. Even with consistent support from family and friends, each day can be a struggle to assess one's failing energy, to change or sometimes just endure the uncomfortable, often painful side-effects of treatment, to struggle against depression at the thought of further weakness and death. I remember, at the worst times, thinking that my life energy—I could feel it somewhere inside my chest, like a little pilot light—was burning very, very low. I was miserable. One cannot overestimate the value, to someone in that condition, of a moment of ease, joy, and well-being.

With a skilled and sensitive teacher in a safe environment, yoga can give us that gift. It can begin to create an inner environment that prepares the ground for healing. It is as if, when we clear away the mental debris through yoga and meditation, our being breathes a sigh of relief, and the residual energy alive in us is allowed to grow and flourish. We empower this most vital and elemental part of ourselves when we hold still, when we pay attention. Some would call this process spiritual. All of us, whatever our beliefs, can recognize this state of grace, this moment of freedom. Yoga teachers can show us how to cultivate this healing condition, give us the physical and mental tools, even when we are gravely ill, to access our deepest, most sustaining energy.

One recent night I went to yoga class at the gym. In a mirrored studio, I worked at lengthening my neck in Shoulderstand, and the other moves and awarenesses the young male instructor encouraged us to experience. Of the 20 or so students in the room, I may have been the only one who had experienced cancer. I was probably the oldest person, and I'm sure I was the one with the roundest tummy. But perhaps I knew, better than the others, why I was there.

For 20 years I did the same five yoga postures every morning, never challenging myself. Now I want to develop precision, build strength, experience the farthest reaches of my body's possibilities. Will this help, along with diet, aerobic exercise, and meditation, to prevent a recurrence of my cancer?

On the one hand, I believe it will. On the other hand, it doesn't matter, because the real reason I do yoga is the feeling I get, that visceral sense of being alive, and the awareness that I'm doing what I can to live as fully as I'm able.

*Oakland-based writer Sandy Boucher is the author of* Opening the Lotus *(Beacon, 1997),* Turning the Wheel *(Beacon, 1993), and* Discovering Kwan Yin, Buddhist Goddess of Compassion (Beacon, 1999). *She teaches writing classes and offers individual consultation for writers. For information, contact her at SandBou@aol.com.*

## Fear in the Belly

*continued from page 63*

increased my determination to get it right, but my exaggerated effort produced the exact result I was trying to avoid—Thud. Another bruise. Each night my wife Jan, who by now was an expert on abrasions and contusions, would examine me, apply unguents, and offer running commentary: "Oh, that is a pretty one, tonight's red scrape goes nicely with last week's purple, which is beginning to blend into yellow. Your rear end looks like a vivid sunset, a smoggy night in Los Angeles, or like you got a caning in Singapore for misconduct."

One afternoon my teacher was shouting the same old instructions to me from the ground—"Kick back, legs forward, force out, kick back harder, pike"—as I crashed repeatedly into the pedestal. In my frustration I thought of the old adage, "If things don't get better soon, I may have to ask you to stop helping me," and determined to ignore all advice and try something new. Perhaps, if I shut my eyes, I might be able to *feel* the movement rather than trying to perfect the moves that I had *imagined* and failed to execute a hundred times. I made several false starts before I screwed up my courage to swing blind. Finally, I shut my eyes, lifted the bar over my head, keeping my arms straight, stepped off into the void, and entered the arc. But this time, something rare happened. My hips began to sway and make love to the pendulum inscribed by the trapeze. I swung out, snake-hipped, kicked up at the apex, and glided downward until I whipped back and rose above the pedestal, my body in a perfect 7. No thud. Two more swings. Still no thud.

For a long time I savored the kinesthetic memory of the lithe movements and the sigh of relief from my long-suffering southern extremities. Then, I went back up to try it again, faithful to the advice of the great fictional guru of flyers and catchers—Burt Lancaster, alias Mike Ribble, who speaks to us from the film *Trapeze*—"Now that he has done it, don't let him lose it." With my eyes alternately shut and open, I practiced again and

again, each swing getting more fluid, until my shoulders begged for rest and I knew I had broken the cycle of dread.

Each time I triumph over a minor fear I get a shot of pure vitality straight into the center of my being. For several days after I lost my fear of smashing into the board, I felt a quiet joy in my loins, not unlike the afterglow that remains after lovemaking. There was a new imprint, a bit of carnal knowledge, a muscular memory lodged in my viscera. Interestingly, this new knowledge was not mental and it did not reside in my imagination. I still could not visualize what I had learned, but I could feel it in my midsection. It was a form of tacit knowledge, blind but powerful, a body-wisdom my mind could not fully comprehend. Now that the tyranny of the negative feedback loop had been broken, the energy that had been tied up in fear was liberated and I could get more into the swing of things.

Fear is an inevitable part of the human condition. Because we are all flying through time towards oblivion, we grasp and hold too tight, squeeze the life out of life. We conspire to avoid awareness of our primal fear, our anxiety about existence, by cultivating the illusion that we are exceptional, invulnerable, immortal, and immune to the perils, sufferings, and tragedies that afflict lesser human beings. Our denial of death causes us to become deluded, grandiose, neurotic, disembodied, and unreal. Albert Camus once said that it is only after we accept the absurdity of the world that we can begin to write a manual of happiness. Paradoxically, when we invite our fears into the hearth of our awareness they cease to be an undifferentiated mass of terrifying demons and become tolerable guests. Each day befriend a single fear and the miscellaneous terrors of being human will never join together to form a morass of vague anxiety that rules your life from the shadows of the unconscious. We learn to fly not by becoming fearless, but by the daily practice of courage.

What is the appeal of danger? Why take risks and live with unnecessary fears? Isn't this masochistic? As I learn to control the

*continued on page 149*


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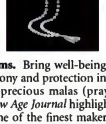

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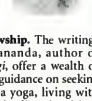
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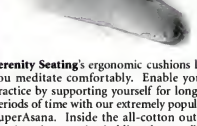
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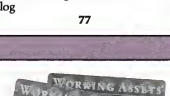
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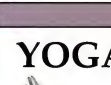
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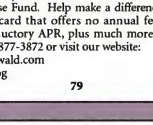
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*continued from page 139*

flood tide of adrenaline I notice there is something highly erotic about living in a conscious relationship to danger and fear. Each time I work on a trick that is near the edge of my capacity, I taste that intoxicating mixture of fear and excitement, dread and pleasure that sustains bull fighters, mountain climbers, deep-sea divers, race car drivers, and trapeze artists.

My friend Jim Peterson, a senior editor at *Playboy*, test drives new motorcycles at high speeds. "Adrenaline is God's own aphrodisiac," he says. A classical psychological study had one group of men cross a narrow swinging bridge over a gorge and another group cross a solid, secure bridge. Each group was met by an attractive female researcher and was later asked if they would like to date her. Eight out of ten of the group that crossed the dangerous bridge and two out of ten who crossed the secure bridge said they would like to date her. Ever since Hemingway exposed and celebrated the link between bull fighting and sexual passion, there has been a suspicion abroad that thrill seekers are slightly perverse folk who need danger either as a sexual stimulant or as a substitute for sex.

Adrenaline may make the heart grow fonder, but there are more profound reasons for courting danger. The presence of danger makes us feel intensely alive.

For me, living with the danger of flying is becoming a kind of daily prayer or meditation practice. The discipline I have adopted for myself is this. Each day I choose some trick or move that is within the range of my ability but which still frightens me and practice it several times as an exercise in keeping my dialogue with fear conscious. Facing danger allows me to make an inventory of my fears, gives me an index of my courage, and forces me to develop grace under pressure.

As nearly as I can figure, the rock-bottom truth is that life is both wonderful and terrifying. The German philosopher Rudolf Otto said that our confrontation with that ultimate reality within which we live and move and have our being


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(which, for lack of a better name, we call "The Holy") is always a mystery that evokes both fascination and fear. The infinitely precious gift of life may be taken from us at any moment by accident, disease, or tragedy. At best, the human condition offers us grave joy.

This suggests that to ask "Why face danger?" is the wrong question. The right question is: "What happens if I try to build a life dedicated to avoiding all danger and all unnecessary risk?" If "security" and "safety" become watchwords by which I live, gradually, the circle of my experience becomes small and claustrophobic.

I need to live near the vital edge between fear and fascination to help me remember that, so long as I live, I will tremble and wonder.

Of course it is possible to become addicted to thrills, chills, and spills. You can tell if you are an excitement junky if any single activity becomes the sole focus of your sense of aliveness and excitement. When risk-taking becomes the only antidote for boredom, it is a dangerous drug. A friend of mine who is a doctor and amateur flyer told me: "Trapeze is the only exciting thing in my life. Without it my life would be boring and meaningless." I worry about him. I wonder why he is not excited about his marriage, his children, his community, his vocation. Addiction is monofocal and destructive no matter whether the drug is alcohol, work, or golf. Vitality is polyfocal. I joke about being addicted to trapeze, but in truth my life is rich in satisfactions; my family, friends, farm, and work give me daily pleasure and a sense of worthiness.

The right use of danger is to increase our overall sense of the wonder and worth of our ordinary moments, activities, and relationships.

There is an important distinction between being foolhardy and spirited in playing near the brink of danger.

When I was a graduate student I had the rare good fortune to spend an afternoon with Gabriel Marcel, the French philosopher about whose work I wrote my doctoral dissertation. As I was dodging through the traffic in Harvard Square, my wife Heather said to him: "Sam likes to take risks." Marcel replied, with a twinkle in his eye, "Only take interesting risks."

Each of us must decide what risks are acceptable for us. I know of at least one highly accomplished flyer, Lisa Hofsess, who began her flying career at a YMCA in Denver, became a professional flyer, and later stopped flying. "Why?" I asked her. "A lot of trapeze enthusiasts live with a high degree of denial and refuse to be aware of the real danger involved," she said. "One of my friends was doing a one and a half somersault to a legs catch, missed, fell into the net, and was paralyzed. After that, I realized that for me flying was an unacceptable risk."

These days, all of us in the San Francisco trapeze community live with an acute sense of danger as we have been saddened and sobered by the recent death of a lovely young woman—a highly accomplished single-swinging trapeze performer who, unaccountably, neglected to fasten her safety belt and fell to her death. She has become our silent companion and, because of her, we fly with greater caution and a poignant sense of our own mortality.

I follow the basic maxim of trapeze work: Avoid unnecessary risks. Never push yourself to do something that is beyond your level of competence. During the first months of my training I was confined to the safety lines that allow novice flyers to practice swinging, falling to the net, going to the catcher, and performing simple tricks with a minimum of risk. Intellectually, I understood that my risk was small because the man on the safety lines could stop my fall before I hit the net at a dangerous angle. I suffered from skinned knees and elbows and net burns on my prominent nose, but no broken bones.

But flying with lines is like making love with a condom; it is safer but not so free. Inevitably, the time came when I longed for the freedom of flying without a safety belt. Repeatedly, I asked myself, "Am I ready to solo?"

Nevertheless, it came as a shock when my teacher announced, "Sam, I think you are ready to fall to the net without lines. Your swing is adequate and you have a pretty good sense of your body position. So, here is what you do. Take off from the board and let your swing die down a little. Then wait until you are at the static point at the end of the swing, release the bar, lift your legs, and

drop to the net. You need to decide before you let go of the bar whether you want to drop to your seat or to your back. If you go for a seat drop, keep your body in an L shape with your legs extended and your arms at your sides. If you go for the back drop, land flat with your arms extended. What you want to avoid is hitting the net with your body in a V, because this will cause you to whiplash and slam your face into your knees. Any questions?"

I had studied the net drop for long enough to understand what I needed to do, and was intellectually convinced that I was ready for it. Nevertheless, my hands began to sweat and my stomach turned flips as I climbed onto the pedestal. I grasped the bar so tightly I probably left my fingerprints on the tape, and took off. Back and forth I swung through several arcs of the pendulum as I had done a hundred times, but this time everything was different. I seemed to be over an abyss rather than a net. And I was all alone. I think my teacher was shouting something to me but I couldn't hear what he was saying.

For a fleeting instant I had the illusion that I could cancel the whole experiment by yelling: "I changed my mind; I'm not ready; hold me on the safety lines." Then, reality struck. There would be no rescue. It was either the seat-drop or the back-drop and I was on my own. I decided for the seat, released the flybar and fell for a long time before I landed in the net halfway between the L and the V, bounced like a crooked ball, and came to rest. I made a quick inventory of my body parts, found them all in working order, let out a victory whoop, and descended from the net with an exultation of meadow larks singing in the vast, new space of freedom that had opened up within my chest.

Death says, "Play it safe." Life says, "Risk it." At the vital edge something dangerous calls my name. What will I risk to stay alive?

*From* Learning to Fly: Trapeze—Reflections on Fear, Trust, and Letting Go *by Sam Keen © 1999 by Sam Keen. Reprinted by permission of Broadway Books, a division of Random House, Inc. All rights reserved.*

## The Psoas

*continued from page 66*

distance between the pelvic crests and the legs, and the femurs are compressed into the hip sockets. To compensate for this constriction, the thigh muscles become overdeveloped. Since full rotation of the thighbones can no longer occur in the hip joints, much of the rotational torque is transferred to the knees and the lumbar spine—a recipe for knee and lower back injuries. In your yoga practice, if you feel strain in your knees or lower back in seated and standing poses, your body may be telling you that you need to lengthen your psoas.

***All sorts of physical traumas can compromise the optimal, healthy functioning of your psoas: injuries to the pelvis or spine, surgery, broken bones and joint injuries in your feet and legs, even a torn ligament from overexuberant stretching in yoga.***

In addition to structural problems, shortening the psoas limits space in the pelvis and abdomen, constricting the organs, putting pressure on nerves, interfering with the movement of fluids, and impairing diaphragmatic breathing. Finally, by limiting your options for movement and by constricting your center, a shortened psoas decreases both your vitality and your connection to the sensations at your skeleto-muscular and emotional core.

Losing touch with your core can happen in myriad ways. You may be born with structural imbalances that eventually lead you to engage the psoas for support. All sorts of physical traumas can compromise the optimal, healthy functioning of your psoas: injuries to the pelvis or spine, surgery, broken bones and joint injuries in your feet and legs,


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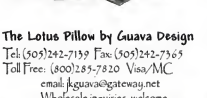
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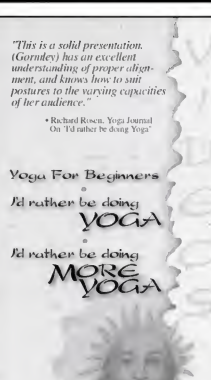
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even a torn ligament from overexuberant stretching in yoga. No matter what their source, muscular imbalances that compensate for injuries, overdeveloped muscles, and chronic muscular tension all add to structural instability that affects the psoas.

***Keeping your psoas released during yoga practice liberates attention previously directed toward your contracted core, allowing you to sense more clearly the delicate balance of action between other muscle groups.***

In addition, our living environment often does not support the proper use of the psoas. From car seats to constrictive clothing, from chairs to shoes that distort posture, many features of modern life curtail our natural movement patterns. In fact, a chronically tightened psoas may date back to your first steps. Baby shoes that constrict the foot, impair the movement of bones, or limit ankle mobility can alter a child's skeletal balance and stifle psoas vitality. Other child-rearing paraphernalia can add to the problem. Rigid plastic baby carriers limit movement, eliminating the natural protection and give-and-take of a mother's body, and playpens restrict the crawling essential for neuromuscular and skeletal maturation. Walkers give infants a false sense of stability, encouraging them to stand and walk before the bones are fully formed and ready to bear weight. Rushing development in this way teaches children to rely on their psoas muscles, rather than their skeletons, for support.

Either emotional trauma or an ongoing lack of emotional support can also lead to a chronically contracted psoas, and thus to a loss of core awareness. If your fight/flight syndrome is triggered into constant arousal, eventually you lose contact with your inner world. One psoas workshop participant, for example, recalled her mother repeatedly admonishing her, "Look where you're going, young lady." Constantly receiving the message that her body couldn't be trusted led her into chronic anxiety. She realized she literally watched every step she took, forcing her skeleton to sag under the weight of a drooping head.

As an adult, learning to consciously release your psoas can rekindle vital energies by re-establishing your connection to your body's internal signals—your instinctual somatic wisdom. Releasing your psoas encourages this process by allowing you to trust your skeletal stability instead of holding yourself up by muscular effort. Sensing your bones supporting weight translates into a physical and emotional feeling of "standing on your own two feet." With a properly functioning psoas, the bones bear weight, the muscles move the bones, and the joints connect the subtle energies of the body. Energy flows through the joints, offering a sense of continuity, like the string flowing through a pearl necklace that transforms it into something more than the sum of its parts. The psoas, by conducting energy, grounds us to the earth, just as a grounding wire prevents shocks and eliminates static on a radio. Freed and grounded, the spine can awaken.

Once you've learned to sense and release your psoas, you can apply these lessons to your yoga practice and everyday life. Keeping your psoas released during yoga practice liberates attention previously directed toward your contracted core, allowing you to sense more clearly the delicate balance of action between other muscle groups. And freeing your center creates a sense of relaxation and calm that can infuse all your activities. In his poem "Burnt Norton," T.S. Eliot wrote a phrase that perfectly captures the inner stability and peacefulness that accompanies a properly functioning psoas: "the still point of the turning world."


*Author of* The Psoas Book, *a guide to the iliopsoas muscle and its effect on the body, mind, and emotions (Guinea Pig Publications; P.O. Box 1226, Felton, CA 95018; www.guineapigpub.com), Liz Koch has taught psoas workshops for over 20 years. She lives in Felton, California, with her husband Jeff Oberdofer and their three children.*

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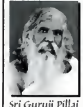
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# Sowing Serenity

*Gardening calms the mind, works the body, and nurtures the soul—and you can always eat the tomatoes.*

**By Jeff Taylor**



If you believe in such things as a soul, a garden is said to be good for it, but the proverb that there are no atheists in gardens may not be true. A garden is made of mundane things, dirt and seeds and sweat, and people who doubt the existence of numinous phenomena can still grow carrots and corn. But once they step into a garden, they have to wonder how flowers grow and vegetables ripen, and even the most hardened doubters become halfway persuaded that *something* is going on. They may fight it, convinced that a garden is nothing more than germ plasm responding to external stimuli. They many think that loving the earth and working with its intelligence are irrational concepts. It doesn't really matter; they ultimately find their own secular peace.

Gardening is an act of love. When you raise a single flower from a seed and it becomes a luminous red tomato that drops in your hand like a gift, you can easily fall in love with the earth. Love means work. It is a lifelong commitment, since you are temporary and the earth is permanent; it's not like you can threaten to leave. The new gardener's honeymoon lasts until the first weed, blight, or drought. Then it's time to work on the relationship.

About eight years ago, along with my co-gardener and life partner, Joy, I began gardening a section of our pasture which slopes gently down the hill all the way to the river. The land was hardpan mixed with gravel. Where the back lawn stopped, the old pasture began; for years, horses had eaten the life out of the soil, and by walking the fence like convicts, eventually they trod the surface into a clay tile floor. It had to be busted up with picks, mattocks, and spades before it could be tilled into anything resembling soil.

With Joy's careful management, we've reaped increasingly better harvests each year. It feels, some days, like a monstrous pain in the kazoo, but at other times like we are personally saving a tiny corner of the planet by increasing its biodiversity. Our garden is a festival of edible, beautiful, and pernicious plants.

This summer, we pushed the fence farther back to plant corn. The day after I moved the fence, which turned out to be a larger enterprise than originally planned, I rose in the morning and had a vision: If every person in the world put the same energy into gardening that he or she spent watching television, the whole world could be a garden again. Gardening is an act of hope, an affirmation of what is possible. Read a newspaper. Then read a seed catalog. Which one makes you feel more hopeful?

Gardens are great teachers, not in words but in gentle or stunning life lessons. They teach faith and miracles, knowledge and wisdom, hope and sweat. They are also very cheap psychiatrists. This is not a sane time in human history. When our psyches reel from the rat race, when traffic is bumper-to-bumper and the clocks tick like whip-strokes inside our souls, we can take all the crap and manure to our garden and leave it there. We reap perfect serenity of spirit, standing on a green island of peace in this crowded, speeding, wasteful, motorized civilization.

Our bodies are made of the same elements found in healthy soil and seawater, so it is nothing short of a homecoming when we touch the earth. Best we should do so reverently, because the earth sustains us. The problems of a garden are real and basic, small matters of life and death to be sure, but nothing you can't fix with a hoe or some bone meal. You can hear yourself think, and if you listen closely, sometimes you can hear the earth speak. It always says *tread lightly*. ◆

*Excerpted from* Tools of the Earth, *by Jeff Taylor, published by Chronicle Books, 1998.*

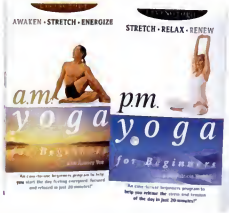
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